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WASHTENAW

JEWISH NEWS

March 2010 Adar/Nisan 5770 Volume XXXIV: Number 6 FREE

Burton Visotzky, Scholar-in-Residence at Beth Israel

Elliot Sorkin, special to the WJN

Rabbi Burton Visotzky, Ph.D., will be the scholar-in-residence from March 19–21, at Beth Israel Congregation. Rabbi Visotzky is a professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

On Friday, March 19, at 8 p.m., Rabbi Visotzky will present "The Dysfunctional Family as Moral Exemplar." The stories of Abraham, Sarah, and their family are at the bedrock of the Jewish people's imagination about the first Jews. Yet read without the lens of Jewish tradition, these are difficult narratives about a tormented family. How can modern Jews find moral lessons in today's readings of Genesis? The lecture will be preceded by the Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m., and a Friday night dinner at 7 p.m. for those who have made reservations and prepaid. The meal will be prepared by Chef Cari, a kosher caterer located in Oak Park. The cost of the dinner is $14 per person.

On Saturday March 20, at 12:30 p.m., Rabbi Visotzky will discuss the topic "Isaac Unbound" at the kiddush luncheon. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all put the story of the binding of Abraham's son at the heart of their religious identity. The texts of all three religious traditions will be discussed as well as their implications for current events. This session is preceded by Shabbat morning services at 9:30 a.m.

Rabbi Burton Visotzky

On Saturday evening, March 20, at 7:30 p.m., Rabbi Visotzky will present "Cairo to Qatar and Beyond–Jewish-Muslim Dialogue in the Past Five Years: One Rabbi's Experiences." For the past half decade, Rabbi Visotzky has been deeply involved in Jewish-Muslim dialogue locally, nationally and internationally. He will assess the progress Jews and Muslims have made toward overcoming enmity and moving toward an agenda of mutual understanding and cooperation.

On Sunday, March 21, at 9:30 a.m., Rabbi Visotzky will present "Moses Goes to Hollywood – Approaches to the Passover Story." The session will include a light breakfast. "In every generation one is obligated to see his or herself as though s/he had participated in the Exodus from Egypt." This statement from the Mishnah came to the big screen in 1998 with DreamWorks' first animated feature, *The Prince of Egypt*. A clip of the film will be shown, after which Rabbi Visotzky will talk about the importance of the film for this generation and his role as a DreamWorks consultant during the making of the movie. There is no charge for breakfast, but reservations are requested.

Rabbi Visotzky is active as a lecturer and scholar-in-residence throughout the United States, Europe and Israel. With Bill Moyers, he developed the series *Genesis: A Living Conversation*, serving as both a consultant and a featured on-screen participant; he was also a consultant to Jeffrey Katzenberg of DreamWorks SKG for the 1998 film *The Prince of Egypt*.

Rabbi Visotzky received his master's degree in education from Harvard University, and received his rabbinic ordination, and Ph.D. from The Jewish Theological Seminary.

This lecture series is funded by the Alfred and Alice Rosenberg Lecture Fund. All the presentations are open to the public at no charge. For more information, contact Mary at 665-9897. ■

Passover to Go Family Program at the JCC

Halye Aisner, special to the WJN

The story of Passover has been retold for thousands of years. It is a story of miraculous transitions–from slavery to freedom,

from despair to hope, from darkness to light. In honor of this holiday, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor will host a Passover to Go family celebration on Sunday, March 21, from 3–6 p.m. Enjoy a light dinner, live music, dancing and lots of crafts to prepare for the holiday. The cost for members is $6 for adults and $8 for children age 2 and up. The cost for non-members is $8 for adults and $10 for children 2 and up. For more information or to RSVP, call 971-0990.

Op-ed: False Witnesses create own Newspeak

By Henry Brysk

Art Aisner introduced us to some of the individuals constituting the "False Witnesses," in his article published in the December 2009 *Washtenaw Jewish News*. The accompanying photographs told us more about them. Then, in the February 2010 *WJN*, Steve Pastner introduced us to several others; and Laurel Federbush gave us an inside view of the group dynamics, the development and intensification of a cult. From his interviews, Aisner cited the public face that they seek to present. Federbush described their nastier true sentiments. It was known about Yasser Arafat (whom Henry Herskovitz admired) that what mattered was not what he said in English but what he said in Arabic. The disruptive antics of the "Witnesses" have been a nuisance at many venues in Ann Arbor (well beyond Beth Israel Congregation), as Pastner detailed. They are not terrorists, just cheerleaders for the terrorists. Nonetheless, as Pastner described at length, they cannot be ignored because they are interlinked with a number of like-minded outfits elsewhere. Furthermore, both Pastner and Federbush identify the group as a cult. As Jessica Lieberman urged, also in the February 2010 *WJN*, I will focus on the ideology rather than the personalities.

The Beth Israel leadership believes that the synagogue harassers should be ignored in order to deny them the publicity they craved. This argument would be valid if the media had cooperated. Unfortunately, they did just the opposite. There were sympathizers of Herskovitz's group at the *Ann Arbor News* (some naive, others disingenuous; they have not migrated to AnnArbor.com) who gave ample coverage to Herskovitz heckling at Jewish events and Blaine Coleman disrupting City Council meetings, usually acting as straight men for the cultists, without balance. Coleman, Herskovitz, and their group kept showing up on the op-ed page, whereas refutations were more rare. Dave Askins interviewed Henry Herskovitz and Aimee Smith on his Teeter Talk blog, but had no guests with an opposite viewpoint; Askins and his wife, Mary Morgan (formerly op-ed editor at the *Ann Arbor News*), now run the *Ann Arbor Chronicle*. A few months ago, David Shtulman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, was invited to the Lynn Rivers talk-show for a discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the WEMU news director, who neglected to tell him that the Palestinian side would be represented by Herskovitz (at a minimum, lamentable unprofessional cluelessness for an ex-Congresswoman and a journalist). In short, the cultists were treated all too often as if they were part of the mainstream; the net result of the official silence of the Jewish community was that the cultists had their platform, with the appearance of legitimacy and with rare rebuttals. Art Aisner's story has had a beneficial effect

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Op-Ed

It's the "witness," not the name, that's false

By Dan Cutler

I feel somewhat responsible for a mix-up that prompted a sidebar clarification in last month's *Washtenaw Jewish News.* The newspaper had profiled some of the picketers who have been targeting their anti-Israel protests at families arriving at my synagogue for Sabbath services. According to one of those profiled, Henry Herskovitz, some of the picketers felt "hurt by the false accusations" in Art Aisner's article ("False Witnesses," December 2009). Among the hurtful falsehoods was a passing mention that he had previously been known locally "by his given name, Henry Henry." Subsequently the paper published a clarification: his birth name was, in fact, Herskovitz. His parents changed the family surname to Henry when he was two.

Now in their 7th year, the picketers in front of Beth Israel Congregation harassing congregants as they approach the synagogue

Meanwhile, to prove something dishonest in the original assertion, an ally of his group posted a 1946 birth certificate for "Henry S. Herskovitz" on a local blog—Michelle Kinnucan's "Zionists Out," a site that announces its "main purpose is to expose Zionists subverting the peace movement, especially in Michigan." Aisner's "innuendo," wrote Kinnucan, was but one "omission, distortion, factual error– harebrained notion [and] inanit[y]" thrown by the Jewish community at one of the "truly prophetic voices in their midst." "It shouldn't have been too hard for Aisner to sleuth this out but it must have better suited his purposes" to falsely report Herskovitz had been known by the odd name given to him by his parents: Henry Henry.

But Art Aisner did not need to sleuth it out. Herskovitz told it himself—to me. I shared it with the editor and that's how it got included in Aisner's story.

I bumped into Herskovitz near the Kerrytown spot where his group reconvenes on Saturday mornings after they're through protesting congregants' arrival at the synagogue. This is the entire conversation, verbatim:

Me: I heard your name used to be Henry Henry.

HH: Yes.

Me: Henry Henry?

HH: Yes.

Me: H-E-N-R-I?

HH: No. H-E-N-R-Y

Me (incredulously); Your parents named you Henry Henry?

HH (explosively): Yes. Can you imagine parents saddling a kid with something like that?!

It is indeed easy to appreciate rage at parents who would saddle a kid with something like that. Less sympathetic is Herskovitz' charge that as a child those parents withheld from him the truth known to all other members of his family, that the common portrayal back then of Israel as small and besieged was a ruse. The secret truth was that it has "the fourth largest military in the world." Discovering this early family deception, he explained to an interviewer shortly after targeting the synagogue, is what bred in him the festering outrage that he focuses on Beth Israel Congregation:

> "I think that for me I'm not quite sure what the epiphany was–I still consider myself a once-a-year Jew and I would go to Beth Israel—from 1970 to 1982. Thirteen straight years I went to the synagogue that we are holding the vigil in front of.
>
> "It was on the steps. I took a break from the prayers, stood outside with some man and he told me that Israel was the fourth mightiest military in the world. And I said, 'you're full of sh*t.' This was this tiny little country. It's besieged by Arabs; through the miracle of God we are able to defend ourselves.
>
> "He just was so calm. He said, 'Don't believe me. Go find out for yourself.'
>
> "And I did. And I found out that it is the fourth largest military in the world….
>
> "And I say, How come I never knew this? Why didn't my parents tell me this? Why didn't my aunts or uncles or cousins or sisters? And so I was outraged. And I think that outrage festered in me. And that was my turning point." *(Josh Knox Interview with Henry Herskovitz, November 2004, U-M Nonviolent Publications, at http://sitemaker.umich.edu/nonviolence/interview_with_henry_herskovitz_)*

Most likely his family didn't tell him because it was a bit of nonsense that happened to be circulating on the internet in 2004, the year the interview took place. Israel is not even the fourth largest military in the Mideast (Turkey's, Egypt's, Syria's, Iran's, Morocco's and, at the time, Iraq's were bigger). Reporter Peter Kenyon picked the pseudo-statistic off the web and dropped

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Extra copies of the *Washtenaw Jewish News* are available at locations throughout Washtenaw County.

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JCC Jewish Film Festival returns to the Michigan Theater, April 25–29

Halye Aisner, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, in association with the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit and the Michigan Theater, will bring the Lenore Marwil Jewish Film Festival to Ann Arbor for its ninth year. The festival will showcase 14 films and two Lunch and Learn programs over five days at the Michigan Theater on East Liberty from Sunday, April 25 through Thursday, April 29.

Film sponsors will be fested at a pre-film Sponsor's Reception catered by Lori Shepard of Simply Scrumptious Catering.

The festival's opening night will feature the Lenore Marwil 2010 Feature Film Winner, *A Matter of Size*, the story of Herzl, an overweight chef from Ramala, who discovers the art of Sumo wrestling after landing a job at a Japanese restaurant. He recruits three of his friends to join him and the result is a touching, sweet, relatable and hilarious story about self-love and acceptance.

Of the 14 films, eight of the films are foreign, including five from Israel. The Israeli films, *The Debt, A Matter of Size* and *For My Father* have all been nominated for multiple Israeli Academy Awards. Leaving the Fold won the award for best documentary at the International Festival of Cinema and Religion in Rome, and Tel Aviv Jaffa, which depicts the remarkable, moving and humorous story of the largest and most important city in Israel, is a Steven Spielberg Jewish Archive production.

The festival will end on April 29 with the showing of the family comedy, *Hey! Hey! It's Esther Blueburger*, starring Keisha Castle-Hughes and Toni Collette. ■

Melton Mini-School offers free classes

Julie Gales, special to the WJN

Interested in Jewish learning? Want a pluralistic, text-based approach? Why not attend a free class of the Ann Arbor Florence Melton Adult Mini-School on either March 10 or March 17, from 7–9:30 p.m.?

The Melton Mini-School, based at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor, is offering opportunities to explore one's rich Jewish heritage. The Melton program is a two-year course of study. There are no exams, no homework, no prerequisites; the only requirement is the desire to learn.

Come find out what Melton is like by trying the first year classes, "Rhythms of Jewish Living" and "Purposes of Jewish Living." The Rhythms class examines different ideas and text central to recurring Jewish rituals, and the Purposes class probes essential Jewish theological concepts in the Bible, Talmud and other sacred texts.

Melton is for everyone, regardless of Jewish affiliation or previous Jewish learning experiences. Current second year student, Lonnie Sussman explains, "I have had wonderful opportunities over the years to learn about Judaism. The Melton course added to my knowledge in a new way, even when it was a topic with which I was very familiar. I think learning with adults, especially adults who come to the class prepared to discuss, bring their own ideas and philosophies, deepens the conversations and makes me think about previous learning with a new perspective. I highly recommend the class for those who have not had the opportunity to learn but also for those with a solid Judaica background."

Faculty member, Matt Kaplan, with two second-year students.

Reservations are required to participate in either of the free class sessions. RSVP to Julie Gales, Melton Mini-School director, at juliegales@jccfed.org.

U-M Jewish alum to gather at the Detroit Zoo

WJN *staff writers*

The University of Michigan Association of Jewish Alumni—Detroit Chapter will sponsor a day for alums at the Detroit Zoo. On Sunday April 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., UMAJA will host a tented space by the wolverine exhibit and offer coloring and craft projects for the kids, kosher-for-Passover snacks, family pictures, music, giveaways of Michigan-in-Hebrew stickers and magnets, sales of Michigan-in-Hebrew clothing and more. There is no charge beyond regular zoo admission; those holding annual zoo membership get in free.

For more information on the University of Michigan Association of Jewish Alumni go to www.umaja.org or call (734) 769-0500. The Detroit Zoo is located at the corner of I-696 and Woodward Avenue in Royal Oak.

Passover Boutique at the JCC March 25

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor will host a Passover Boutique on Thursday, March 25, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Unique items for Passover such as seder plates, matzah covers and haggadot will be available for purchase from Beth Israel Gift Shop, Temple Beth Emeth Gift Shop and Tradition Tradition. For more information, contact the JCC at 971-0990.

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Thome Memorial Foundation supports Older Adult Services at JFS

Robin Little, special to the WJN

Jewish Family Services was awarded a three-year grant from the Edward M. and Della L. Thome Memorial Foundation in support of older adult services for low-income clients.

The Thome Memorial Foundation was established in 2002 by Robert P. Thome, of Owosso, Michigan, to honor the memory of his parents, Edward and Della Thome. The Foundation is committed to providing for the dignified treatment of the elderly, focusing on the critical issues of healthcare, housing, family service, neighborhood involvement, and aging with dignity at home.

Through the provision of comprehensive, client-centered services that address the physical, emotional, social, and cultural needs of the elderly, JFS Older Adults Services programs address each of the critical focus areas of the Thome Memorial Foundation:

Health care: The Patient Partners Program improves medical access by training volunteers to help seniors prepare for medical appointments, facilitate communication between patients and medical staff and improve the client's comprehension of medical information.

Transportation: JFS has four CareVans, one of which is one of only two low-cost wheelchair accessible vans in the county.

Housing and Aging in Place: One of the primary roles of case management is to address housing issues through assessment, development of short and long term plans and coordination of support services, as indicated above.

Family Services: Caregiver support is provided through monthly caregiver educational programs and support groups, intergenerational cultural programming and supportive counseling for family members caring for loved ones.

Neighborhood Involvement: JFS operates the "SPICE" (Social, Physical, Intellectual, Cultural, and Educational) program – open to people from all religious and cultural backgrounds – in the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. This program keeps older adults connected to their community through a multi-generational environment that promotes community involvement. JFS also reaches out to seniors in assisted living facilities through ElderLink, which provides regular visits and cultural programming for residents.

Employment: The JFS Employment Program serves both native born and immigrant populations through comprehensive employment and career services and the JET (Jobs, Employment, and Training) program through the local MichiganWorks! Agency. Geriatric social workers coordinate with JFS employment staff to provide employment counseling to older adults. JFS also participates in the AARP Senior Aid program, employing at least two senior aides at any given time.

This funding will enable JFS to continue to serve the ever-growing numbers of older adults and their caregivers requesting our services. For more information about Older Adult Services, visit the JFS website, www.jfsannarbor.org, or telephone the office (769-0209). ■

JCC welcomes new Cultural Arts and Education Director

Halye Aisner, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor welcomes Mimi Weisberg as the new Cultural Arts and Education Director. Weisberg offers more than 20 years of experience in development, community relations, and Jewish education. A native of Toledo, Ohio, Weisberg has lived in many different communities due to her husband Bob's career in logistics.

In each community, Weisberg was employed as a Jewish educator. She has taught liturgical skills, ethics, values and Torah to a multi-age demographic. She was an English major and a Non-Profit/Public Health Administration major at the University of Toledo and Bowling Green State University. Her career began in development and she raised thousands of dollars as a consultant to non-profit organizations that were struggling financially. Due to her great successes, she was able to leverage her consulting business to municipal and civic organizations that needed assistance. After moving to Flint, Michigan, Weisberg worked with high risk, underserved children at an elementary school of 700+ students. She worked closely with staff, parents and the Flint community as a children's advocate to offer these children more opportunities to ensure their educational success.

After her move to Ann Arbor in 2007, Weisberg became the Volunteer Recruitment Specialist for SOS Community Services. She forged strong relationships with members of the Washtenaw County community and recruited hundreds of individuals to work for SOS. She is especially proud of her "Adopt-a-Month" campaign that ensured that the SOS Food Pantry never had empty shelves by engaging area businesses, religious institutions, schools, and service organizations in collecting food/personal hygiene/baby items for the underserved population in Washtenaw County.

Mimi Weisberg

Weisberg and her husband Bob have three daughters: Allison (23), Kelsey (20), and Emilie (14). An avid reader, "foodie," genealogist and moviegoer, Weisberg is very excited to bring her passion for Judaism and her experience to the Jewish community of Ann Arbor.

To contact Weisberg, call 971-0990 or email mimiweisberg@jccfed.org.

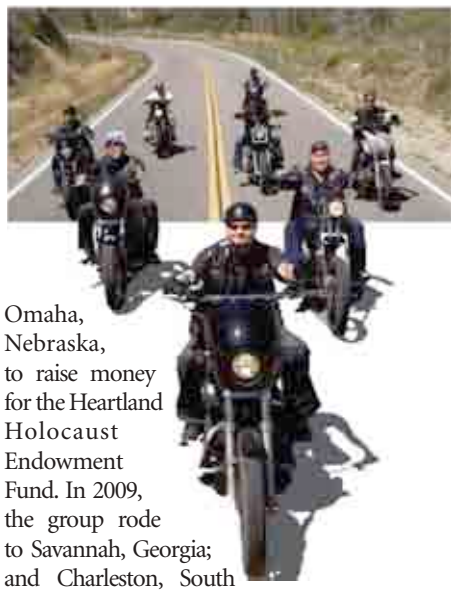
Calling all Jewish motorcyclists

Betsy Ahrens, special to the WJN

The Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance is seeking Jewish motorcyclists in the Ann Arbor area to form a local club to ultimately belong to JMA. The Jewish Motorcyclists Alliance is a non-profit umbrella organization consisting of 41 clubs worldwide in just four years–and growing–with over 3,500 members. There is no fee for member clubs to join the JMA. For more information, visit the JMA website at http://jewishbikersworldwide.com and join the JMA forum to keep abreast of what is happening in the world of Jewish motorcycling.

The common thread among members is religion. The JMA mission is to create a global environment whereby members of the Jewish faith who ride motorcycles can congregate physically, and through the Internet, share and exchange ideas about matters of concern to the Jewish community, as well as issues concerning motorcycles.

Every year JMA holds the "Ride to Remember" to memorialize the victims of the Holocaust and to raise money for organizations that support and promote Holocaust education and awareness. In past years, rides have included travel to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.; to Whitwell, Tennessee, visiting the home of the world renown Paper Clip Project and Museum; to New York City to ride in the Israeli Day Parade in support of the Israeli Mogen David Adom first responders organization; and 2008 to Omaha, Nebraska, to raise money for the Heartland Holocaust Endowment Fund. In 2009, the group rode to Savannah, Georgia; and Charleston, South Carolina, to show support for educational resources aimed at Holocaust studies in both cities. In 2010, JMA will be in Skokie, Illinois. In the past four years, the group has raised over $225,000 for Holocaust awareness. It is a three-day event, which in addition to its charitable mission brings everyone together in what also serves as the group's annual gathering.



Contact Betsy Ahrens at msbetsya@yahoo.com or Ron Wynne at ccaod@yahoo.com for more information about the group.

Senior Photography Exhibit on display through March

Merrill Poliner, special to the WJN.

From casual shutterbugs to professional artists; from analog to computer enhanced works; from nature and landscapes to political statements; the entries of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor Senior Photography Exhibit embrace a wide spectrum of photographers, techniques and subjects.

The exhibit includes over 70 pieces from 20 artists. For some, this is the first time that their works are being exhibited; for others, this is one of many exhibits in their professional career. Some of the photographs are for sale while others are being shared with the public only for this event.

The Senior Photography Exhibit, mounted in the JCC's Amster Gallery, will be available for viewing through March during regular building hours. Contact Merrill Poliner at 971-0990 or merrill@jfsannarbor.org with questions about the exhibit.

Used Book and Media Collection Day at JCC

Halye Aisner, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor will participate in the Bookstock Used Book and Media Sale. Stop by the JCC on Sunday, March 21, from 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m., with used books, including books, books on tape, records, videos, CDs and DVDs. Donors can drive through and drop them off at the curb. All contributions will be donated to their sale, which will take place from April 18–April 25 at Laurel Park Place in Livonia.

This year, former JCC President Elaine Margolis will be the day chair on Friday, April 23. Many volunteers are needed to help make this a success. The JCC will receive a share of the book sale profits for helping with this project. To schedule a pick-up of large donations or to volunteer, contact Rebekah Gamble at 971-0990 rebekahgamble@jccfed.org.

JCC offers new gardening class

Halye Aisner, special to the WJN

For everyone that always wanted a garden but was too afraid to do so, or for those who think they don't have the space for a garden, this class is for you. The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor is offering a new Introduction to Gardening class on Monday, March 8, 7–8:30 p.m., at the JCC. Master gardener Cindy Cook will lead the class and teach participants how to plant, grow and maintain a garden; she will also offer tips on container gardening and how to make the most of the space one has. The cost for this one time class is $5. For more information or to RSVP, contact Rebekah Gamble at rebekahgamble@jccfed.org or 971-0990.

Delightful, Delicious, De-Laxes: JFS honors Judie and Jerry Lax

Robin Little, special to the WJN

On Sunday, January 24, the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College was filled with almost 400 guests for a "delightful, delicious, de-Laxes" event honoring Judie and Jerry Lax. Jewish Family Services presented them with the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Leadership Award, an honor given to members of the Ann Arbor community who have demonstrated outstanding community service.

The event commenced with a strolling reception in the Atrium, with hors d'oeuvres and desserts. The decoration theme featured the Laxes' community involvement. There was a tribute wall with quotes from many nonprofit organizations about the contributions the Laxes have made over the years. The decorations also included street signs with the names of community, University of Michigan, and Jewish organizations, as well as signs featuring the services provided by JFS.

The "formal" program in the auditorium began with a photo montage, followed by the singing of an original version of "Together, Wherever They Go," performed by Wendy and Ted Lawrence, with lyrics by Ed Stein, the master of ceremonies. Ed then introduced a video he produced, with interviews of many of the Laxes friends. He asked a series of questions, "How would you describe Judy and Jerry," "Who Rules the Roost?," "What is it Like to Travel with the Laxes?" and more. Following this there was a sing-along to "De-Laxes," led by Susan Gitterman, again with original lyrics by Ed Stein.

JFS Executive Director Anya Abramzon and JFS Board President Steve Gerber presented the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Leadership Award to the Laxes. Judie and Jerry spoke about what the award meant to them, what their involvement with JFS means to them, and what JFS means to the entire community. They emphasized the importance of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, at a time when community members are facing unprecedented hardships with rising unemployment and an unstable economy. A video about JFS followed, highlighting the services the agency provides to people from all backgrounds in our community.

The event also included the presentation of two staff awards: the Staff Appreciation Award was given to Andre Yastchenko, International Services and Transportation program director. A retirement award was present to Barbara Schreier, the English as a Second Language training specialist.

The Laxes requested that donations in their honor be earmarked for the JFS Emergency Aid Fund. This fund supports the Crisis Management and Community Services Department that provides a variety of services to individuals and families in crisis. These include: comprehensive intake, referrals, financial assistance, advocacy, and designing an Individualize Service Plan to deal with the immediate crisis and then planning next steps to help clients achieve stability. In 2009, JFS served more than 1,000 clients in crisis and provided more than $68,000 in direct cash Disbursements from the Emergency Aid Fund help prevent evictions or utility shut-off and assist with unexpected medical or automobile bills, funeral expenses and other needs. It is already clear that the requests for service in 2010 will be at the same pace, or higher, as the economy continues to be unstable.

The Lax family

Donations can still be made to the Emergency Aid Fund, in honor of Judie and Jerry via the JFS website, www.jfsannarbor.org. Also on the website is the Laxes "virtual" tribute book, and in the near future JFS will post the video from the program, the JFS video, and photographs taken during the event. ■

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March SPICE* of Life

***Social, Physical, Intellectual, Cultural, and Educational Programs for Adults**

Merrill Poliner, special to the WJN

Tuesdays

11 a.m.: Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar. $4 per session, or 3 sessions for $10

Noon: Dairy Lunch Buffet. $3 per person

1 p.m.: Games and Activities. Join in for a variety of games and activities including mahjong, quilting, art projects, and other card games.

1 p.m.: Wii sports including bowling, tennis, golf and baseball. No sports or computer experience necessary.

1:30 p.m.: Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group). Open to the public as well as University of Michigan faculty, staff and students, all ages and levels welcome. Beanster's Café, ground floor, Michigan League. Free. For more information, call 936-2367.

Thursdays

10 a.m.: Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar. $4 per session, or 3 sessions for $10

11 a.m.: Current Events with Heather Dombey. A Jewish perspective on this week's news. Bring items of interest for group discussion.

Noon: Dairy Lunch Buffet. $3 per person

1 p.m.: Thursday Special Events and Presentations (see below for details)

2:15 p.m.: Literary Group facilitated by Sidney Warschausky, Call Merrill Poliner, 971-0990, for more information and the current book.

Fridays

1:30 p.m.: Yiddish Reading Group at the Jewish Community Center. Call Ray Juni for additional information at 761-2765

Tuesday special events

Tuesdays through March 23

10 a.m.–noon The Bible In It's Time with Dr. Liz Fried. This semester the class will cover "The Prophets In their World." Class is tuition free to Washtenaw County residents age 65 and over through the Washtenaw Community College Department of Lifelong Learning. Registration at the first class. Contact Merrill at 971-0990 to register or for more information.

March 9 and 23

1–2 p.m. Welcome to the new Wii! Join SPICE for Wii sports. No experience or physical expertise necessary. Call Merrill at 971-0990 for more information.

Thursday special events

March 4

12:30 p.m. Birthday celebration for all with February birthdays. Bring your family and friends for lunch and birthday cake.

1 p.m. Professor Chava Weissler, Fellow at the University of Michigan Frankel Institute of Judaic Studies, brings her expertise on "Jewish Folktales" to SPICE.

March 11

12:30 p.m. A registered nurse from Care Response will take and record blood pressures and address any questions. Free. (This event is repeated the second Thursday of each month.)

1 p.m. Ira Lax, Outreach Assistant at the Ann Arbor District Library talks about Library Programs and Services with Seniors in Mind.

March 18

12:30 pm. Allison Pollock, MSW, Jewish Family Services geriatric social workers will be available for discussion. 1 p.m. "Between Purim and Pasach" a presentation by Rabbi Levy of Temple Beth Emeth.

March 25

11:30 a.m. Intergenerational Passover program with the JCC's Early Childhood Center.

1 p.m. An all-Gershwin program performed by local musician, Will Bennett, will include solo pianist music as well as a sing-a-long.

TBE Sisterhood March Events

Hillary Handwerger, special to the WJN

Jewish Cooking 101—Passover

March 7, 6–7:30 p.m., TBE Kitchen, with Marianne Aaron: Learn how to make maror, several kinds of charoset, and for dessert, truffles, special for Passover. Those planning to participate should send favorite Passover recipes to Helaine Reid, at hmr1335@comcast.net, by March 1 for a recipe exchange. Cost is $5 per person. RSVP to Helaine Reid by March 4.

The Kindertransport

March 14, 6–7:30 p.m., TBE Chapel: Learn about the Kindertransport program, which took place from 1938–1939, nine months prior to the outbreak of World War II. The United Kingdom took in nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from Nazi Germany and the occupied territories. The children were placed in British foster homes, hostels, and on farms. Find out about the Kindertransport Quilts and other things the group will see on the April 18 trip to the Holocaust Museum.

Sisterhood Book and Film Club

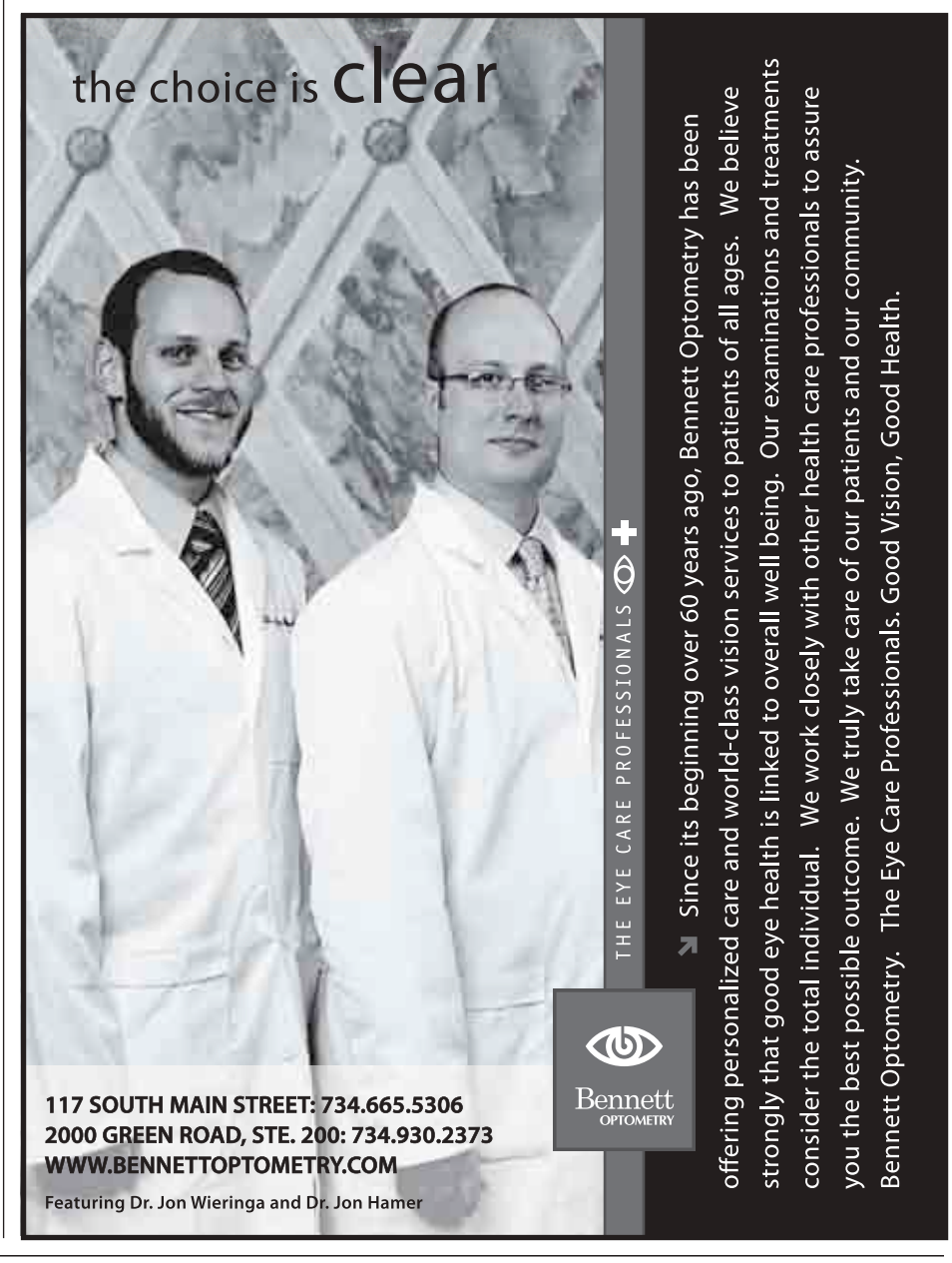
March 16, 7:30 p.m.: The Book/Film Club will meet to read and discuss *Kindertranport*, a one-act play by Diane Samuels, set mostly in an attic storeroom of a suburban London home in 1979, with a few scenes set in Germany in 1939. Past and present are intertwined throughout the play. Copies of the play will be available at the meeting or in advance from Annette Fisch, at annette1636@yahoo.com.

TBE Sisterhood Passover Sale

March 21, from 3–7:30 p.m.: Everything for a seder—including seder and matzah plates and covers; haggadahs; Ellijah and Miriam cups; toys; cookbooks; paper goods; and more—will be on sale.

TBE Sisterhood Women's Torah Study

March 1 and 15, 2010, 7–8:30 p.m., TBE Adult Lounge: Participants will discuss the contents of the week's portion through the eyes of the essays and poetry contained in the commentary, and share insights as Jewish women of all ages, with quite varied life experience. At 8:30 p.m. there will be optional meditation in the chapel. On March 1, Cantor Rose will discuss Ki Tissa, and on March 15 the group will study Vayikra, the first Torah portion in the book of Leviticus.



Beth Israel Congregation March events

Elliot Sorkin, special to the WJN

Lunch and Learns for March

Lunch and Learn sessions are offered on Wednesdays at noon throughout March, on the lower level of the Garfunkel Schteingart Activities Center (2010 Washtenaw Avenue). Participants are asked to bring a vegetarian/dairy lunch; Beth Israel will provide snacks and beverages.

- March 3 and March 10: "In the Beginning…" will be led by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal.

  During these two sessions, the creation narratives from the Torah, as well as stories from other cultures, will be examined. What role do such stories play in forming a community's identity, and what is their importance in context with the scientific understanding of evolution?
- March 17 and March 24: "What I Did Over My Sabbatical" will be presented by Rabbi Dobrusin. Rabbi Dobrusin will discuss his Sabbatical experiences and share some of the writing he has been working on during his months away. He will also teach from the texts that he has been studying over this time.

Beth Israel Red Cross blood drive

Beth Israel's annual blood drive will be conducted on Sunday, March 7, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in the Beth Israel Social Hall—this year with freshly baked cookies and hot chocolate. To sign up online, donors are asked to visit www.give-life.org, click Donate Blood Now, and fill in their email address and birth date where indicated, and the sponsor code, which is: bic13. The donor will then have to fill out a registration page, click the bottom button and they will be directed to the Beth Israel Blood drive. They will click the radio button next to the blood drive where they would like to donate and then make their appointment on the page that will appear. Tamar Weaver at 677-1736 will be glad help anyone sign up.

Each donor answers a critical need that cannot be supplied in any other way.

Judaism 101: an Introduction and a Refresher

Judaism 101 is a continuing class meant for anyone who is looking to learn or review some of the fundamentals of Judaism. Two topics are still to be covered through the end of the course: Conservative Judaism and Sacred Texts. Each topic will be explored for three weeks. Adults are welcome to sign up for one topic, or two topics. Contact Mary at 665-9897 to sign up for this free course. All classes begin at 7:30 p.m. with Maariv, the evening service, and are facilitated by Rabbi Kim Blumenthal. The session on Conservative Judaism will take place on March 10, 17, and 24. The sessions on Sacred Texts will take place on April 21, 28, and May 5.

Shaharit Service and Siyum (Taanit Bechorot – Pesach Fast of the First Born).

On Monday, March 29, at 7 a.m., Beth Israel will offer a Shaharit service and Siyyum (the conclusion of the study of a traditional Jewish text) in the Beth Israel Sanctuary, followed by a *hametz* breakfast at the Garfunkel Schteingart Activities Center (2010 Washtenaw). Following the service, Rabbi Dobrusin will teach the final section of the Talmudic tractate of Megilla which he has been studying during his Sabbatical. It is a traditional obligation for the first-born sons to fast on the day before Pesach begins. In Conservative Judaism first-born daughters are also encouraged to fast. Studying this final section of text enables those who participate in a "seudat mitzvah," a meal celebrating the fulfillment of a mitzvah, and allows one to eat despite the fast.

Beth Israel Reads

The Beth Israel Religious School Education Committee and the Adult Library are sponsoring the fourth annual "Beth Israel Reads" program with the book *The Zookeepers Wife*, by noted nature writer Diane Ackerman. Beth Israel Reads seeks to promote Jewish literacy and a communal discourse on Jewish topics and ideas. It is true story about the courageous actions of two individuals, Antonina and Jan Zabinski, which occurred in and around Warsaw during World War II. The community discussion of the book will occur on Saturday, April 24, after the Shabbat services (approximately 12:30 p.m.) The discussion will be led by Virginia Murphy, U-M lecturer in the Residential College Department of Creative Writing.

Passover services

Passover morning services are held in the Beth Israel Sanctuary on the first two days of Passover, March 30 and 31, and on the last two days of Passover, April 5 and April 6. All services begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at noon, followed by a light kiddush of Passover sweets. Mincha and Maariv services vary on Passover. Check www.bethisrael-aa.org for the latest information.

Tot Shabbat

Tot Shabbat is a special Saturday morning service for parents and their children 2–5 years old on March 13 and March 27 at 11:15 a.m. that includes songs, stories, and prayers. This program is run by Peretz Hirshbein on the second Saturday of each month and Jessica Kander on the fourth Saturday of each month. Special preschool sized tables are set up for the regular kiddush so that families may easily attend with their children following Tot Shabbat. There is no charge for this bi-monthly program.

The winning team from Beth Israel's third annual Quiz Night, held January 16, 2010, will help plan and run next year's event. Left to right: Bob Carbeck, Dennie Carbeck, Adam Eichner, Susan Harris, David Zacks, Rick Mintz, and Barb Mintz

Kehilat Shabbat and Moadon on Saturday mornings

This Saturday morning program for K–5th graders will take place this month on March 13 at 11 a.m. It will include a morning service to celebrate, to schmooze and to learn, led by Gabe Pachter on the theme "Happy Holidays from Purim to Passover." Moadon, a gathering place for elementary school aged children, starts at 10 a.m. every Saturday, and provides a Junior Congregation experience at 11 a.m. on weeks where there is no Kehillat Shabbat.

Child/Parent Room

Starting at 9:30 a.m., parents have the use of Room 14, which is stocked with toys, books, and snacks during the morning service that lasts until 12:15 p.m. The kiddush following services has kid-sized tables and chairs so that even the littlest ones may participate in the kiddush reception.

General community is always welcome

All of Beth Israel's events, plus all educational offerings are open to the general community, often at no cost. For further information, call 665-9897, or visit www.bethisrael-aa.org.

This month at Temple Beth Emeth

Rabbi Lisa Delson, special to the WJN

TBE Spirituality Book Club

Tuesday, March 2, 7:30 p.m.

This month's selection is *Kabbalah: A Love Story* by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner. Hidden within the binding of an ancient text that has been passed down through the ages lies the answer to one of the heart's eternal questions. When the text falls into the hands of Rabbi Kalman Stern, he has no idea that his lonely life of intellectual pursuits is about to change once he opens the book. Soon afterward, he meets astronomer Isabel Benveniste, a woman of science who stirs his soul as no woman has for many years. But Kalman has much to learn before he can unlock his heart and let true love into his life. The key lies in the mysterious document he finds inside the Zohar, the master text of the Kabbalah. This book club is open to everyone.

TBE's Twenties and Thirties Iron Chef: Bubbe's Favorites:

Saturday, March 13, 6 p.m.

Rabbi Levy and Rabbi Delson will face off in a Jewish cooking challenge of epic proportions. All participants will choose sides and cook delicious dishes that would make *Bubbe* (a grandmother) proud. The cooking will take place in TBE's kitchen. The cost is $5 per person. For more information, call 665-4744 or email Rabbi Delson at ldelson@templebethemeth.org.

Rabbi Levy and Rabbi Delson will lead teams in the TNT Iron Chef competition

Men's Torah Study:

Tuesdays, March 9 and 23

This lay-led group will meet on March 9, discussing Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei, and on March 23, discussing Parashat Tzav. Refreshments are served and newcomers are always welcomed. For questions, contact Roger Stutesman, rgstutesman@sbcglobal.net.

TBE Second Night Seder:

Tuesday, March 30, 6 p.m.

Rabbi Levy and Cantor Rose lead an annual second night seder for both congregants and members of the community wishing to attend. This child-friendly seder will include all the favorite Passover ceremonial foods; a dinner of matzah ball soup, Chicken Marbella, roasted chicken or a vegetarian stuffed portabella mushroom, asparagus, herb roasted potatoes, and Passover cookies for dessert, all prepared by Simply Scrumptious. The cost is $18 per adult and $15 per child. Children under 3 are free if sharing a dinner with an adult. After March 15, members of the community are invited to fill in available space. Contact the office with your reservation, 665-4744.

On the last day of Passover, Monday, April 5, Beth Emeth will hold a Passover Yiskor service at 11 a.m. in the chapel, followed by a light lunch. All are invited to attend.

Saturday Morning Minyan:

Every Saturday, 9:30-10:15 a.m.

Join in for an alternative, lay-led service every Saturday morning following Torah Study with Rabbi Levy. Each month a member of the congregation takes the opportunity to lead a small group in prayer using the theme of the Torah portion or another source to guide the group. Each week is different and offers a new insight into Jewish tradition and possibly a chance to meditate personally.

From Beth Israel to Broadway

On Saturday, March 13, at 8 p.m., the *From Beth Israel to Broadway* fundraiser will present an evening of Broadway tunes both old and new performed by students from the University of Michigan Musical Theater Department. The evening will honor Beth Israel's "Our Fair Lady," Carol Finerman. The U-M Musical Theatre Department is one of the most successful in the country, with a large proportion of graduates going on to professional careers on Broadway and around the world.

Event tickets are available for $36, $72 or $108 each. $20 of each ticket is non-tax deductible with the remainder considered a donation. The "playbill" for the evening will be a tribute book in which congregants can purchase ads to greet and honor Carol.

Carol Finerman

In addition to the event, $54 ticket raffles are be available for purchase. Only 180 tickets will be sold. The first prize is a Broadway adventure: 2 tickets to the Lion King on Broadway (at a time of the winner's choosing), including free backstage tour, roundtrip airfare for two to New York City, and $300 spending money. The second and third prizes are two tickets to the U-M Musical Theater production of Ragtime on Sunday, April 18, at 2 p.m. Contact 665-9897 for an invitation and more information.

The bread our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

More than a mere commemoration of past history, a Jewish holiday is an event to be personally experienced and relived. Every Jewish holiday has a contemporary message for every Jew in every time and place. This is particularly true of Pesach. As our Sages declare "In every generation, a person is obligated to regard himself as if he personally left Egypt."

This is the purpose of the seder on Pesach eve: to provide every individual with an opportunity to experience an exodus from his own personal house of bondage.

The opening of the seder expresses this concept by introducing the recitation of the story of the Exodus with the declaration, *Hei lachma anya*—"Behold the bread of affliction." In his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe notes:

> Those who are meticulous take care to say K'ha lachma or Ha k'lachma ("This is like the bread of affliction"), since [the matzah we are eating] is not the actual bread our forefathers ate.

In his edition of the haggadah, however, the Alter Rebbe chooses the wording, *Hei lachma anya*. This emphasizes that the seder is intended to move us to the point where we ourselves experience a liberation from slavery, and view the matzah before us as "the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt."

"In every generation, a person is obligated to regard himself as if he personally left Egypt."

Though we may never have been in Egypt, nor experienced actual slavery, redemption can be real for us, for, as Chassidic thought explains, Egypt is not only a geographical location but also a state of mind. In fact the Hebrew name for Egypt, Mitzrayim, is almost identical to the word *meitzarim*, which means straits or limitations. In other words, our personal exodus from Egypt involves self-transcendence, lifting ourselves out of our natural limitations.

We each possess a soul, a spark of God. And, like God Himself, this spark is infinite and unbounded. On the personal level, Egypt symbolizes those influences and forces which confine and limit this spiritual potential.

The nature of this personal Egypt varies according to one's character and degree of refinement. One person's Egypt may be defined by his selfish desires and natural drives; another's, by the bounds of intellect and reason. There is even an "Egypt of holiness," a state in which a person committed to spiritual growth, restricts his potential for advancement, accepting his natural limitations as permanent.

All of these Egypts confine our infinite Godly nature. Leaving Egypt means leaping over all these (and any other) barriers and constraints, and bringing our infinite spiritual potential to the surface.

A personal experience of redemption affects the totality of our divine service. As long as a person lives within his personal Egypt, as long as the infinite potential of his soul is denied expression, he will perceive the observance of the Torah and its mitzvot as external to himself, separate from the essence of his being. When a person relives the Exodus and uncovers his essential Godly nature, he develops a deeper connection with the Torah.

Experiencing a personal exodus from Egypt thus becomes "the great foundation and strong pillar of our Torah and our faith," with relevance extending far beyond the time of the Pesach celebration and applying to every moment of our lives. When the Exodus is understood this way, every dimension of Jewish conduct and every mitzvah a person performs becomes a step out of Egypt and an expression of his inner Godly potential, an opportunity to realize his true self.

To emphasize that the Exodus from Egypt is an ongoing experience, the Alter Rebbe omitted the passage beginning Chasal Siddur Pesach ("The Pesach Seder has been concluded.") from his text of the haggadah. Similarly, in token of the continuing relevance of the Exodus, we recall the redemption from Egypt in our daily prayers, both morning and evening.

A turning point in spiritual history

The continued significance of the Exodus from Egypt can be viewed from another perspective. The Torah says of the Jewish people, "They are My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves." The redemption from Egypt and the subsequent experience of receiving the Torah established the identity of the Jewish people as "servants of God" and not "servants of servants." After leaving Egypt, they could never again be subject to the same kind of servitude.

The Maharal of Prague explains that the freedom achieved through the Exodus transformed the essential nature of our people. Through the Exodus, we acquired the nature of free men. Despite subsequent conquests and subjugation by other nations, the fundamental nature of the Jewish people has not changed. Our freedom is maintained only because, in a spiritual sense, God is constantly taking us out of Egypt. The miracle of the redemption is thus not an event of the past, but a constant occurrence in our daily lives.

This ongoing experience of redemption that is realized throughout our lives is intensified by reliving the Exodus during the Pesach holiday. May the personal redemption experienced by every individual at that time hasten the redemption of our entire people and lead to the fulfillment of the hope expressed at the climax of the Haggadah, *LeShanah HaBaah biYerushalayim* ("Next year in Jerusalem!), with the coming of Mashiach, speedily in our days. ■

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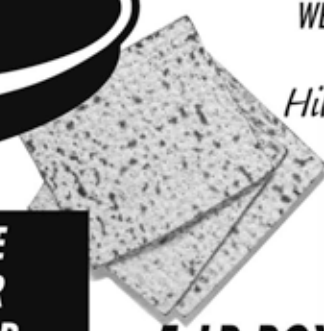

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How a Modern Orthodox Jew struggled to reconcile her yogic practice with her Judaism

By Taffy Brodesser-Akner

LOS ANGELES (Tablet)—A few years ago, freshly moved to Los Angeles, I started practicing yoga. I was feeling anxious and worried, and if I were still a New Yorker, I'd have gone on anti-depressants. But I'm a big believer in doing what the Romans do, and as it turned out, yoga helped a lot.

Now, in class, as I take my first bow—a stretch upward, followed by an open-armed dive to my toes—I am no longer thinking about survival. Instead, with room to breathe and think, I instead wonder about the implications of bowing, of doing yoga in the first place.

Yoga, with its meditation, with its mysterious secrets and ties to Hinduism and Buddhism, isn't just a physiological practice; it's a spiritual one. And I am a Modern Orthodox Jew. By practicing yoga, I'm now forced to wonder, am I practicing a religion outside my own? Am I sinning before God?

When I first took up yoga, this question never occurred to me. I was dealing with a difficult time, but I had also abandoned my religious upbringing. I was at peace with a secular life that included some High Holidays observance and crippling guilt when I didn't observe Passover.

Now, married to a man who converted so that we could be together, I find myself running an Orthodox home. (You know the old joke: Don't date a non-Jew unless you want to end up really religious.)

I'm surprisingly happy in my lifestyle, but I'm also realizing that a true immersion in yogic practice may very well be a violation of my Jewish one.

There is a statue of Ganesh, the Hindu deity, in the yoga studio I attend. At the end of the class, my instructor says "Namaste" and bows toward the class. We bow back. I am bowing toward the teacher, but also toward the statue. Namaste means "The Divine in me salutes the Divine in you."

During many of the meditation sessions, we are asked to put our hands in "prayer position," which is what it sounds like: hands joined together at the heart. The more I thought about it, the more I worried that yoga might be its own religion, and that I might be committing a sin—worshipping an idol, even—by practicing it.

This might seem like a niggling question of minutia, but Judaism, especially Orthodox Judaism, is a religion filled with niggling questions of minutiae—how an animal is slaughtered, at what angle, exactly, a mezuzah should be affixed to a door post.

Committing idolatry carries serious implications, whether you do so accidentally or not. In the Talmud (Sanhedrin 74), it states that there are only three sins in which a person is commanded to die rather than commit the sin: the second and third are incest and murder. The first is idolatry.

That was the Lubavitch rebbe's rationale when, in 1977, he forbade his followers from practicing yoga, transcendental meditation and the like.

"In as much as these movements involve certain rites and rituals, they have been rightly regarded by Rabbinic authorities as cults bordering on, and in some respects actual, ëavodah zarah,' " he wrote, using the Hebrew term for idolatry. "Accordingly Rabbinic authorities everywhere … ruled that these cults come under all the strictures associated with avodah zarah, so that also their appurtenances come under strict prohibition."

But, of course, I'm not a Lubavitcher. So I asked my yoga teacher at City Yoga in West Hollywood, Linda Eifer, a Conservative Jew, what she thought.

"Yoga is not a religion," she said emphatically. "It's a spiritual practice that combines the body, the mind and the spirit. It's based on an ancient Indian tradition that includes inspiration from statues, which are a mythology that combine human and divine characteristics."

Yoga is a spiritual practice that combines the body, the mind and the spirit. It's based on an ancient Indian tradition that includes inspiration from statues, which are a mythology that combine human and divine characteristics.

Aside from the statues, that's pretty much what my religion is to me.

David Adelson, a Reform rabbi in New York who is enrolled at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, a two-year program that includes yoga retreats and text study, offered a distinction.

"If I'm in a church around Christmastime, I sing and even say 'Jesus' in the hymns. I know that I am just singing because I like singing, and in no way praying, so it doesn't worry me," he said. "Yoga feels just a bit dicier because I am a full participant in the experience, not an observer. But I believe in general that to constitute avodah zarah, you probably need some kavana," or intention.

Kavana is an interesting thing. Intuitively, it would seem that a religion demanding absolute morality would be concerned with intention. But, actually, that's not really the case. If you eat bread on Passover, even accidentally, you have sinned. If you give charity but grudgingly, the charity still counts for the good. On Yom Kippur, we repent for sins we didn't even know we did. And then there are Hannah's sons—seven Jews who chose to die rather than bow to Antiochus, the Greek ruler who tried to forcibly convert Jews in 167 BCE. Bowing but not meaning it wasn't an option.

Judaism is concerned not just with your actions but also very much with how your actions appear to others. Bowing is the physical manifestation of idolatry, whatever your intention.

"Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves," says Leviticus 26:1, "and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it."

But let's ignore that for a second and accept Adelson's argument that intention does matter. Even so, don't I intentionally practice yoga? And while my yoga teacher had said she doesn't find yoga incompatible with Judaism because her status as a Jew isn't compromised by her practice of yoga, I have a more literal view of Judaism and what it expects from me. I believe that I'm supposed to practice only Judaism. I don't believe the practice of another religion makes me an adherent of that religion, but I do believe that I choose to only practice Judaism.

The rituals and chanting that was expected of me in yoga seem like another religion to me—and practicing another religion is practicing another religion.

But Srinivasan, the senior teacher at the worldwide Shivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers, says I have it backward. "Yoga is not a religion but a science of religion," he explained. "It applies to all religions. It's not that yoga comes from Hinduism. Hinduism originates in yoga. Buddhism comes from yoga, too." Srinivasan doesn't see how spiritual yoga practice and Judaism are incompatible.

"Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach used to come to our ashrams," he said. "He understood we were talking about the same thing. Chasidic mysticism and Kabbalah are very much in line with yogic thought."

I explain to Srinivasan that the approach may be similar—even some of the text and ideas may be similar—but that only proves my point that yoga is a religion.

"There is yoga in every religion," he responded. "Yoga means ëunion' or ëabsolute consciousness' with God. Don't look at the differences; look at the similarities. Yoga is beyond words or institution. When you use the word ëreligion,' people want to know what books you read, what language you speak."

Srinivasan also says that though some sects of yoga won't even use the word God, the tradition is similar to monotheis"We're all talking about the same God," he said. To him, the statue of Ganesh at the front of many yoga studios is the same God to whom Jews pray.

"Don't confuse the map for the actual place," he said. "God is everywhere. There is no conflict here. There is respect for that diversity. To explain God is to limit God."

So could I just be bowing in front of this statue without bowing to the statue? I asked Pinchas Giller, an Orthodox rabbi who practices yoga at the same studio I do.

"Many Hindus argue these days that their deities are just archetypal principles," says Giller. "But any third-grader in Hebrew school will tell you that those are idols.

"Veneration and offerings are unacceptable. I avoid classes where the teacher is too into the mythos. It's hard to escape the impression that if you take some of the practices too seriously then it could be avodah zarah."

Giller practices yoga for the exercise and only for the exercise, he's careful to say.

Chanah Forster, a Chasid and yoga teacher in Brooklyn, N.Y., may have found a solution.

"Yoga absolutely is a religion," she says.

Before she became religious, Forster lived on an ashram, where she became certified to teach yoga. She still teaches it, but with an approach tailored to her current audience. There is no chanting in her class—not even Om, the vibrational sound recited at the start of most yoga classes. She describes poses, but won't use their traditional Sanskrit names. She also won't say their English translations, like Downward-Facing Dog.

"Instead I'll say to raise your hips to the ceiling," she explained to me. "The Sanskrit names have a spiritual meaning. If you don't call these poses by their Sanskrit names, it's just exercise."

Forster believes that when you do any of these things—chant, say Om, speak in Sanskrit—you are opening yourself up spiritually to outside influences.

"These aren't just words," she said. "They have meanings and repercussions to your ëneshama' "—your soul—"and they are at odds with Jewish spirituality."

But despite all these things at odds with Judaism, yoga seems to have a strong pull on Jews. In the past few years, several yoga minyans, prayer services in which yoga stretches accompany liturgy, have gotten under way. At least half of the people who frequent my yoga studio, as well as many of its teachers, are Jewish. India is a hotbed of Israeli tourism, and the great Hindu leader Ram Dass was born Richard Alpert, a nice Jewish boy. (The author Rodger Kamenetz wrote a whole book, "The Jew in the Lotus," about Jews struggling to understand and relate to Eastern spirituality.)

Though unresolved, it's a debate that's new to me and that has new urgency for me as I've returned to religious observance. The kabbalistic viewpoint asserts that we are born with a pintele yid, a Jewish spark always searching for spirituality. If you live in America in 2010, your pintele yid may be a little malnourished, and whether because of assimilation or a lack of Jewish practice, some Jews seek to feed this hunger outside of the synagogue.

And the question of yoga's compatibility with Judaism might just be an unanswerable one. In Adelson's Reform world, it's the Jew's intention that matters. But in the Judaism I know, the one I have chosen to participate in, intentions, or even wishes, are not the only things to consider.

My Judaism is a Judaism that is preoccupied with my physical life as much as my spiritual one. It has laws for when I eat, what wear, how I wash my hands. The problem isn't what yoga might ask me to think or believe; it's what it asks me to do. And despite my physical flexibility—you should see my frog pose—I don't have the same spiritual agility.

Further practice of Judaism has not, historically, helped me become more open-minded. But perhaps that is where yoga can be an asset, not a detriment, to my religious practice. Yes, yoga walks a fine line (verboten to some; certainly not to all). But maybe my uptight approach to religion requires yoga and its nuances of illicit practice to help me remain flexible in my spirit, as well as my body. Maybe having something that isn't so easy to reconcile, a gray area, is good for me. ■

(Taffy Brodesser-Akner, a writer living in Los Angeles, has been published in the Los Angeles Times, Salon *and the* Daily Beast. *Reprinted from Tabletmag.com, a new read on Jewish life.)*

Hebrew Day School and JCC/Early Childhood educators share experiences

Dina Shtull, special to the WJN

Early childhood educators at the Hebrew Day School (HDS) and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor's Early Childhood Center (ECC) have a lot in common. Together they educate the children enrolled in the community's only Jewishly-sponsored full-day early childhood programs. Both of the programs are located in the Jewish Community Center building. The educators met together in the beginning of the school year to celebrate their commonalities and to plan for increased collaboration. As a result, classrooms share experiences to the benefit of all the children. Hebrew Day School second graders gather weekly with the children in the ECC Kangaroo Room, alternating being the hosts. Each second grader pairs up with a Kangaroo partner for story time – reading and explaining a Hebrew story. They sing Hebrew songs, and serve as the audience for their plays. The second graders also taught their partners to recognize and write Hebrew letters; they played games to find the letters in the classroom. Prior to Chanukah, the preschoolers invited the HDS students to a Chanukah party to play dreidle, make a craft project, and eat *sufganiot*. During Tu B'Shvat, the preschoolers invited the HDS students for a leaf-making project and for story time about trees. The HDS students helped the preschoolers write a few words in English about the leaves; they also wrote a short sentence in Hebrew describing the leaf.

"I'm happy that my daughter Leor is experiencing this while at the preschool," says ECC parent Iris Laden-Bashan. "The integration is important and enriching to both age groups," she said. "It has been a wonderful experience," says HDS teacher Aron Kaufman. "Our students look forward to reading with the preschoolers and sharing what they are learning. They are giving the preschoolers a little "taste"

of the joy they experience everyday learning Hebrew. But the most special thing is seeing the building of the relationship and how comfortable the children are with each other. For them, it's like having another set of siblings," says Kaufman. "I also personally enjoy planning joint activities with the Kangaroo teaching staff, Natalie Wiesend, Kelly Wade and Nancy Witter," adds Kaufman. ECC teacher Natalie Wiesend echoes these sentiments. "Partnering with the HDS second grade has greatly enhanced the Judaic curriculum in the Kangaroo Room. We have shared Jewish traditions; both our English and Hebrew speaking children benefit from the exposure to Hebrew. Our children really look forward to our weekly meetings. The partnership creates a sense of community, building relationships between the ECC and HDS."

Hebrew Day School's Kindergarten (Gan) class invites an ECC preschool classroom to share Shabbat. The Gan students welcome their guests with little presents and a story told by a teacher. "The preschoolers are always gracious guests who share challah, juice, singing, and a special Shabbat snack," says Gan teacher Judy Musket. "The students love seeing their former teachers and friends, and the preschoolers get a chance to see what it's like on the big kid side of the building," she says.

The fifth graders at HDS also shared time with the ECC preschoolers. Over a six-week period, they visited the Frog Room to read books and to teach the children how to make pop-up cards to give as gifts to their parents. The older children first practiced reading the books with expression and using punctuation to guide their reading. During one visit, the children had fun playing together outside for recess.

At special holiday times during the year, all of the students from both schools join together. Earlier this year during Simchat Torah, 185 young children from HDS and ECC joined together for *HaKafot* (processions) with the Torah.

"The interactions between the ECC preschoolers and the HDS students have been so valuable," says Peretz Hirshbein, assistant director of ECC. "The classroom relationships have given our oldest preschoolers positive models, and the HDS students really enjoy the chance to nurture younger children. When we gather for holiday celebrations the students at both schools develop a sense of belonging to a larger Jewish community. The feeling of belonging to a larger community is so important for Jewish identity building," Peretz adds. ■

1. Nina Parker and Abigail Chervin
2. Aurora Brater and Rachel Seigel
3. Aurora Brater and Natan Bondin
4. Keren McGinity and Justin Pacernick
5. Dean Davis-Annis and Gabriel Seir

Hebrew Day School and Jewish Family Service offer Lunch Bunch for Girls

Dina Shtull, special to the WJN

Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor and Jewish Family Services have joined together to offer a support group for fourth grade girls to explore issues common to girls this age. The group, called the Lunch Bunch, is led by Sarah Stone, a second year MSW student who is interning at JFS as part of her program at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Through art projects, humor and personal sharing, the girls talk about friendship, role models and how to work out issues that may arise.

"As girls approach adolescence, they are exposed to cultural and media images which overemphasize appearance and attractiveness to boys, and de-emphasize qualities such as leadership and strength of character," comments Dr. Andrea Hansell, consulting psychologist at HDS. "By middle school many girls struggle with issues of self-esteem, body image, peer pressure and stereotyped ideas of what is and isn't feminine; girl-girl relationships can become competitive rather than supportive. Research has shown that pre-adolescent girls can benefit from mentor-led groups that focus on girls' strengths and competence and help them build healthy connections to each other." The leading provider of gender-specific, research-based programs for girls, called Girls Circle (www.girlscircle.com), recently conducted a study that found improvement in six skill areas as a result of these supportive opportunities, including: finding things in common with a new person; seeing beyond a girl's reputation; telling adults what they need; feeling good about their body; picking friends that treat them the way they want to be treated and telling people how much they mean to them.

The Lunch Bunch

"Because of its small size and supportive social environment, the Hebrew Day School is an ideal place to run a girls' group," says Stone. "By the fourth grade, girls know each other well and have strong connections to one another. This gives us a solid base from which to launch a group focused on positive social relationships. As a group in a Jewish school, we can also incorporate Jewish values into the discussion of what it means to be a woman."

The fourth grade girls are very excited about their Lunch Bunch. "Lunch Bunch ROCKS," says fourth grader Rachel Pacernick. "It is important because you can talk with your friends and express your feelings," she adds. "It is a place where you can say anything and it stays inside," says Hadas Pollock. "Everybody gets to know each other and be better friends," she continues. "We're going to learn not just how to be a girl, but how to be a good person, a good girl," says her sister, Ayelet Pollock.

Why Jewish preschool?

Peretz Hirshbein, special to the WJN

As residents of Ann Arbor, parents in the community have a wide range of excellent early childhood programs from which to choose. Such is the demand for excellence, that the city of Ann Arbor has double the number of NAEYC accredited preschools than the cities of West Bloomfield, Farmington Hills, Oak Park, Southfield, and Birmingham combined! So given all of these choices, why choose a Jewish preschool?

Sophie Kirchmeier in the Duck Room

Because of the way that young children learn, the early years present a golden opportunity to develop in children a durable Jewish identity, filled with positive associations of Jewish life. Young children learn by doing. Over the course of their early years, children construct knowledge of the world around them through their experiences. The daily, weekly, and yearly routine of a Jewish preschool is filled with experiences that create long-lasting associations. Former ECC parent and current Beth Israel Education Director Cindy Saper once wrote of her children,

> "My children show, in their day-to-day life, that Jewish influences have permeated their consciousness. My children know that Friday means the smell of challah baking because at the preschool the children bake challah every week. On Shabbat we often hear a story from the Torah portion told by a little one. My children know the sound of the shofar when they hear it on Rosh HaShanah because they have already heard it at school. Pesach would not be Pesach without the song about Pharoah and the frogs in his bed."

Through these kinds of experiences, children in Jewish preschool programs are able to relate to Jewish stories, holidays, and observances in ways that are meaningful to them, providing a foundation for developing a positive Jewish identiy.

But what about knowledge that is not specifically Jewish? All high quality preschool programs provide the experiences that develop literacy, number sense, or emotional regulation – foundational knowledge that stays with children through the course of a lifetime. But in a Jewish preschool program, this knowledge is developed through a Jewish lens. For instance, the concept of a week becomes more than just the order of days; the smell of spices at Havdalah on Mondays and the taste of challah and grape juice at Kabbalat Shabbat on Fridays add a Jewish frame to the concept of a week. A year is defined not only by the passing of months, but also through the telling of Torah stories. The development of storytelling skills, and the ability to follow a narrative, comes not only from Dr. Seuss, but also from acting out a new part of the narrative of the Torah each week.

JCC/ECC preschoolers display Chanukah pictures

A Jewish preschool affects more than just the children enrolled; there is an effect on families as well. A 2003 study by the Jewish Early Childhood Education Partnership found that of the parents they surveyed, "Nearly 70 percent of those interviewed claimed that they were doing something different in terms of their Jewish observance or Jewish lifestyle as a result of their child attending a Jewish preschool and that the preschool experience had a positive impact on their Jewish family life." In the words of one participant in the study, "Jewish preschool helped us recognize that we wanted to have a Jewish family with a Jewish identity and be proud of it."

Ann Arbor is home to the only NAEYC Accredited, Jewish early childhood program in the state. For more information on the JCC Early Childhood Center, or to learn how to enroll, call 971-0990 or visit www.jccannarbor.org. ■

Open enrollment for the JCC Early Childhood Center 2010-11 school year begins March 1

Noreen DeYoung, special to the WJN

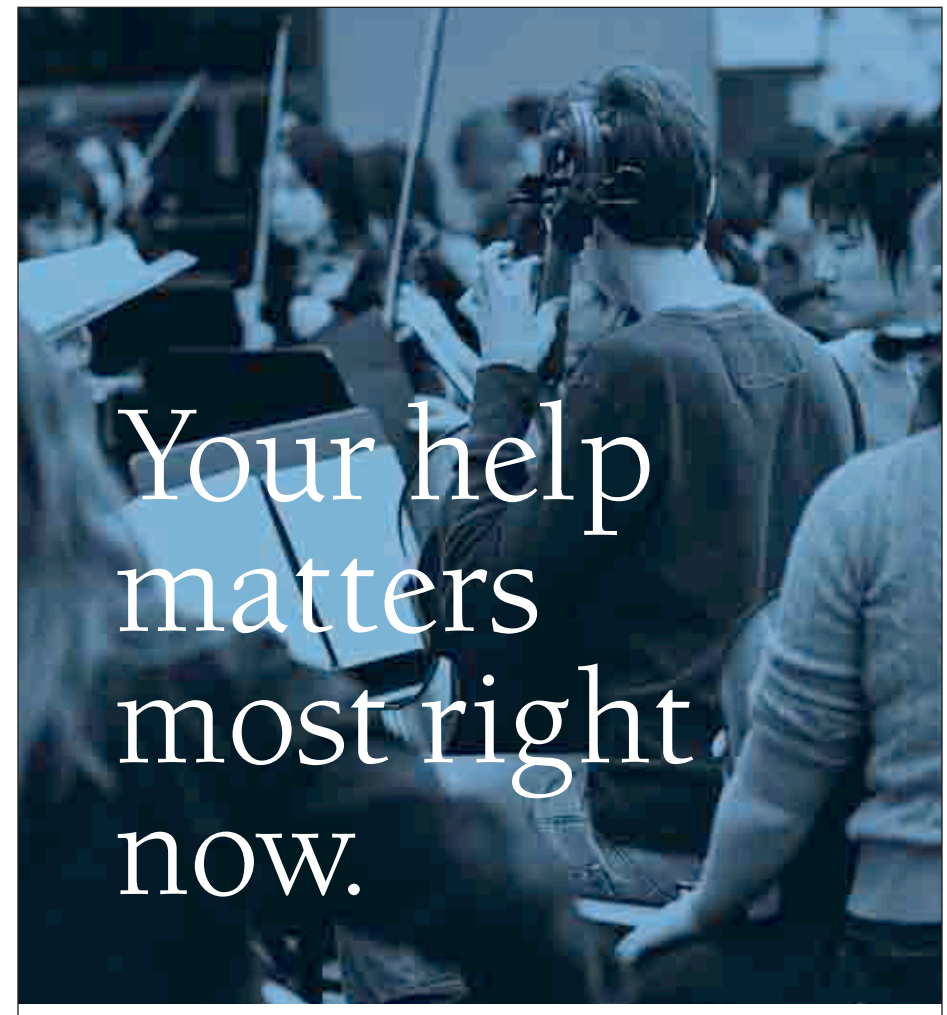
The Early Childhood Center will be accepting applications for child care and pre-school programs for the 2010–11 school year beginning Monday, March 1, for children and siblings currently enrolled in the program. Applications for member families of JCC-affiliate organizations (Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, Hebrew Day School, Jewish Cultural Society, and Reconstructionist Havurah) will begin Monday, March 8, and enrollment for the general public will begin Monday, March 15.

State licensed and NAEYC accredited, the Child Care programs are offered for children ages two months to five-years-old. The Active Learning Center offers a High/Scope curriculum to best meet the needs of each age group. Highly-educated, warm and nurturing staff help children excel in all aspects of their lives. All children three years and older participate in a pre-school program designed to prepare children for kindergarten. The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Children can register for full- or part-time.

A half-day pre-school program is offered for children three- to five-years-old. This program meets from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. A High/Scope curriculum, which is an active learning approach to education for young children, is offered.

All of the programs integrate Jewish curriculum with the High/Scope curriculum. Children in pre-school classes can also participate in the outdoor JCC summer camp program.

For more information about any of the programs or for an application, call 971-0990.



Our schools are facing the budget crunch.

As a result, the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation is asking for your donation. We have a 17-year history raising private donations for the Ann Arbor Public Schools – and today we're pleading for your help on behalf of our community. Our kids. And our collective future. We're asking you to donate the amount you were willing to pay through a Millage "Yes" vote as seen below. It won't solve the budget shortfalls. But it will take us one step closer to keeping our schools innovative and excellent. And 100% of your money will stay in Ann Arbor.

Home value (or more)	Taxable value	Suggested donation
$150,000	$75,000	$150
$200,000	$100,000	$200
$250,000	$125,000	$250
$300,000	$150,000	$300
$500,000	$250,000	$500
$750,000	$375,000	$750
$900,000+	$450,000	$900+

Note: Taxable value is estimated at 50% of home value.

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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To be part of the solution, visit **www.supportannarborschools.org/urgentneed** or call Wendy Correll at **(734) 994-1969**

The tipping points

Noa Gutterman, staff writer

Noa Gutterman

On January 28, I became a second semester senior. While this may seem trivial, it was one of my biggest high school milestones. It was the tipping point in my senior year and will lead to final tests, senior prom, and ultimately, high school graduation. And while no fireworks appeared after my last test and no confetti rained down from the sky when I walked out the school doors, my high school experience was forever changed. On my second official school day as a second semester senior, I attended a senior class meeting about ordering "Class of 2010" merchandise. And while I have no intention of purchasing a class ring, necklace or "ice tassel," filling out my order form for a cap and gown seemed premature. Literally, five days previous to this, the time until graduation seemed to stretch on into infinity. Now, I walk by the countdown calendar every day, which tells me the exact amount of time remaining until I receive my diploma (62 days, 20 hours and 11 seconds). In every class, I have been lectured on the "disease" of senioritis and the harmful repercussions of slacking off. Simply by finishing my semester one exams, the faraway beacon of light that is a high school diploma has gotten a lot brighter.

This tipping point is not unique to high school seniors. In America, we celebrate Groundhog's Day, a holiday in which we observe the activities of a small woodland animal and base these observations on our future weather. I guess it's no wonder that the weather channel is always wrong. By watching the shadow of the poor groundhog that is chosen to be the emblem of our upcoming season, we set a bizarre, yet predictable tipping point for our culture. When I was in kindergarten, I remember praying during Friday night services that the groundhog's shadow would favor a brief winter and spring would appear early. I also remember being extremely disappointed that my prayers were not answered. Who knows, maybe God really does prefer six extra weeks of cold. It seems very strange that American culture dictates that we teach our children to base the coming of a new season upon an old pagan festival.

As Jews, we celebrate our own tipping point, known as Tu'Bishvat. Following this weeklong holiday labeled as the birthday party of the trees, we diligently await the coming of spring. While some cities or countries may be closer to the coming of spring, Ann Arbor is definitely not close, and for that matter, neither is Israel. Both places are just beginning to thaw out and it will be at least two more months for us before we see signs of spring. It snowed today both in Ann Arbor and in the Golan Heights. So why do we celebrate Tu'Bishvat two months before spring? Why do we celebrate Groundhog's Day two months before spring? Why do I know what an "ice tassel" is four months before graduation? Without the early reminder that future events are coming, we tend to lose sight of our goals. I think that *Crime and Punishment* and the central limit theorum would be too much to handle without my cap and gown order form glowing with anticipation in my schoolbag. I think that the promise of spring would be intangible without the sweet figs and carob chips or the tiny shadow of a groundhog. As human beings and as Jews, we need tipping points in our lives to remind us of the good that is still yet to come. ■

Jewish Educators winter workshop inspires local educators

Cindy Saper, special to the WJN

The Jewish Educators' Council of Ann Arbor held its annual evening of winter workshops recently, with approximately 70 local teachers participating. Following a dinner where educators had the opportunity to relax and get to know each other, and a D'var Torah with Federation Director David Shtulman focusing on the importance of Jewish education, teachers attended two out of the following three workshops: Talking is a Good Thing: Channeling the Chatter, with presenter Nan Gill; Using Children's Literature to Teach Jewish Values to Young Children, with presenter Linda Grekin; and, Bible Stories through Theater, with presenter Lisa Kander.

Presenter Nan Gill, who has been a teacher, special education administrator, and elementary school principal, and is currently superintendent of University Preparatory Academy, a K-12 school district in Detroit, presented twice: once to teachers of younger students, and once to teachers of older students. Both groups left with an arsenal of great activities and games with which to engage students, getting them to talk to each other and learn content at the same time.

Presenter Linda Grekin worked with teachers of preschool through fifth grade, and shared ideas, resources, and music and movement activities that highlight Jewish values. She is the CEO and creative director of Grandma's Book Club, a business that uses picture books to form a bond between grandparents and grandchildren and the author of a book about people with no sense of direction, I'll Never Get Lost Again. Grekin brought her years of teaching, working as a school librarian and her love of literature and the arts into play into her workshop.

Similarly, presenter Lisa Hodge Kander brought her love of drama and children into her workshop on process drama that was geared to teachers of grades six through twelve. Kander has over thirty years experience in theater, a PhD in theater, and many years experience directing youth theater programs, teaching, writing, and directing plays at Temple Beth El in Flint. She is the author of *Ladies, Legends and Legacies*, which was performed at the Michigan conference of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

Teachers enjoyed the hands-on nature of all three workshops, raved about the amazing presenters, and returned to the classrooms inspired and ready to use what they learned. The Jewish Educators' Council is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, and serves teachers from the Hebrew Day School and local religious schools.

Ken Pardes spring events announced

Dafna Eisbruch, special to the WJN

Members of Ken Pardes gather to discuss the meaning of Tu B'shvat

A new year and new semester are here, and Ken Pardes, the local chapter of the Habonim Dror youth movement and Camp Tavor, is already off to a strong start and is looking forward to a calendar filled with exciting events.

For their first gathering of the year, they celebrated Tu B'Shvat, the Jewish holiday of nature, with a cozy, fun seder and made tasty berry smoothies. An overnight leadership seminar for tenth and eleventh graders was also widely attended and declared a success.

The next upcoming event for Ken Pardes is a favorite tradition—an ice skating trip involving the Ann Arbor group as well as the Detroit chapter, Ken Afikim. That event will be held on Friday, February 21. The group's yearly sleepovers for older and younger kids will both be held on Friday, March 12, followed by a chocolate-themed Passover seder on March 21. Says Yael Warshai, one of the group's leaders, "We're always really happy and excited to meet new kids at our events!"

Many members of Ken Pardes are also looking forward to this summer at their affiliated summer camp, Camp Tavor. For more information about Ken Pardes youth group and upcoming events, contact Yael Warshai at yaelw07@hotmail.com. For more information about Camp Tavor, contact Kate Sandler at registrar@camptavor.org.

Local teens learn life lessons through Young Judaea

Rebecca Schwab, special to the WJN

Michele Freed and Mara Abramson (center) of Ann Arbor with Ben Zizook of Chicago, Sam Wein of South Bend, and Reby Silverman of Chicago

In today's society, being a teenager is hard, but being a Jewish teenager is harder. Ignorance and anti-Semitism still exist and still plague America's Jewish youth. Struggling to find a sense of self, teenagers feel like they are drowning. Struggling to understand their own personal Jewish identity, Jewish teenagers sometimes feel lost. Young Judaea offers a solution.

Young Judaea is a national youth movement that aims to provide teenagers with a way to understand who they are as Jews and the motivation to do something about it. As a part of the national teen-led board of Young Judaea, Michele Freed, senior at Huron High School, has been taught many life lessons from the movement.

"I am responsible for budgeting my time in new ways in order to yield the best possible outcome. I create programs that kids my age will participate in, and I learn from experience how to effectively lead. Young Judaea presents me with a challenge and an opportunity to play an active role in influencing the Jewish leaders of tomorrow," says Freed.

There is a misconception that Young Judaea is only a camp with occasional reunions throughout the year. However, the purpose of Young Judaea is not to give Jewish teens an unforgettable summer, but instead to enable a memorable future. Built upon the principles of Jewish identity, peer leadership, pluralism, social action, and Zionism, the movement provides participants with an incentive to make a difference. In Ann Arbor, the many attendees of Camp Young Judaea Midwest in Waupaca, Wisconsin take an active role in continuing year-round activities.

For Hannah Alexander, a senior at Pioneer High School, Young Judaea has been a guiding force in shaping who she is as a Jew and a woman. "Young Judaea gives me the opportunity to create a family for myself and be a leader among others. I am able to connect with the world and understand social and political problems on a different level. Young Judaea follows a set of values that have taught me how to explore my Jewish identity and follow my own spirituality."

Young Judaea doesn't make being a teenager any easier, but it does help point the way to a functional Jewish identity. Young Judaea unites kids all over the USA, instills a sense of pride in their heritage, and emphasizes the importance of each of their roles in creating the future they desire.

Young Judaea's Midwest Convention will take place April 8–11 at Camp Henry Horner outside Chicago. To get involved or for more information, contact Rebecca Schwab at Rjschwaby92@aol.com, or Eileen Freed at youngjudaeamidwest@gmail.com, or check out the Midwest Spring Convention 2010 page on Facebook.

Book provides a guide for teens on building better relationships

By Suzanne Kurtz

WASHINGTON (JTA)—Carl Levy remembers the day he met Randy, his wife of 39 years. It was October 15, 1965 and they were teenagers attending a United Synagogue Youth convention in New Jersey.

"I remember sitting at the table for dinner. Randy was a little late that night," Levy says, adding that "I remember her sitting down at the table. I remember being interested."

Says his wife: "I remember what I wore."

Five years later they married, and Levy says with a chuckle, "It's all because of USY."

The Levys and 50 other couples lovingly shared their romantic journey on a recent video for USY titled *Summer Lovin'*. The couples had one thing in common: Each relationship blossomed due to some involvement with the Conservative youth movement.

As the video concludes, a smiling newlywed and expectant father advises, "So look to your left, look to your right; that might be your future wife or husband."

While the Jewish community places an emphasis on the importance of Jews meeting and marrying other Jews, it rarely looks at the nature of these relationships, says Deborah Rosenbloom, director of programs at Jewish Women International. "We talk about the end goal of marrying a Jew, but we don't talk about what [makes] a good relationship," Rosenbloom says.

Recognizing the need to have this discussion, JWI teamed with USY nearly two years ago to develop a comprehensive guide to help educate Jewish teenagers on the importance of developing healthy relationships.

The result of the collaboration is a nearly 200-page source book titled *Love Your Neighbor, Love Yourself*, which debuted with the "Summer Lovin'" video before 1,000 teens last December at USY's four-day annual convention in Chicago.

"This was my fourth [USY] convention," says Josh Block, 17, of Massachusetts. "And I was the most impressed with the topics in this book."

Divided into four major sections in 13 chapters, the book addresses some weighty issues affecting healthy intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, and provides useful tactics for good relational decision making. Problems such as abuse and aggression in relationships are discussed at length, and modern dilemmas of self-image, sexuality and the power of language also are explored.

Woven throughout the book are quotations, parables and insights from contemporary Jewish writings such as Rabbi Elliot Dorff's *This Is My Beloved, This Is My Friend: A Rabbinic Letter on Intimate Relations,* and ancient sources like the Talmud and Torah with real-time scenarios, pop-culture references and thought-provoking exercises.

One exercise, on the meaning and responsibilities of a good friend, resonated strongly with 17-year-old Charlene Thorpe.

Thorpe says that at the convention, she found herself reflecting on a quotation in the source book from Pirke Avot that spoke of the importance of friends keeping each others' secrets. The insight, she says, helped her confront a friend who told other friends about Thorpe's crush on a particular boy.

"It made me look at how I define my friendships," the Massachusetts high school senior says. "I talked to [the girl] and said, 'We can't have this. Friends are trustworthy. How can you tell my secrets?' "

The book also delves into some timely issues such as appropriate language and behavior when communicating via the Internet and social networking sites.

"We've had kids exchange e-mails and Facebook [postings] before they've even gone on a summer trip together," says Karen Stein, USY assistant director and the book's editor. "They might have had an entire relationship with someone before they've ever met in person."

It becomes a problem of "cyber-bullying," says Stein, when teens post inappropriate, sometimes hurtful statements, comments and photographs of themselves and others online.

She says the book was designed with the hope of teaching teens "how to behave online [and] how to portray themselves [appropriately]."

The pervasiveness of teens and technology abuse in relationships was highlighted by a 2007 survey conducted by Liz Claiborne Inc., which showed that 71 percent of teens said boyfriends or girlfriends spreading rumors about them on cell phones and social networking sites was a serious problem.

Sixty-eight percent of the teen respondents said a boyfriend or girlfriend sharing private or embarrassing pictures or videos on cell phones and computers is another serious problem.

Making matters worse, Rosenbloom says, is that "parents are clueless."

The Claiborne survey also found that 82 percent of parents whose teens were e-mailed or texted 30 times per hour were unaware this was even happening.

With their source book, JWI and USY are hoping to not only educate teens but their parents, too.

Louis Sacks, 17, a high school junior from Pennsylvania, says he hopes his friends who could not attend the USY convention will be able to use material from the source book.

"My dad is borrowing it!" he adds.

"Our goal is for Jewish teens to have opportunities to talk about relationships in a guided, facilitated conversation with adults," Rosenbloom says. "If we can help instill core values, it will impact their relationships."

Among those core values is respect, she says, "whether that relationship is with parents, friends, partners, the community or yourself."

As for the book, Rosenbloom says she welcomes the opportunity to develop similar material for teens from other denominations.

"We see this as prevention work," she says. "The material takes time to sink in, but it will come back to [the teens]. They get it."

For Melissa Sperber, 18, it already is sinking in.

"I hadn't put much thought into [relationships] before convention," the New Jersey high school senior says. "I guess I subconsciously knew in order to have a healthy relationship you need to be your own best friend. But I walked away from convention thinking about it more: Don't give your heart away until you really love yourself." ■

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Camp Raanana news

Camp Raanana to hold early bird registration event

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

Camp Raanana will be holding a camp registration event on Sunday, March 14, from 12:30–2 p.m., at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor. At the camp registration event, families will be able to find out more about Camp Raanana and sign up before the March 15 early bird registration deadline. A free pizza lunch will be provided and there will also be activities for new and returning campers. In addition, returning campers that bring friends who register for camp for the first time will receive an extra $10 off a session of Camp Raanana.

Located on a beautiful private beachfront at Independence Lake Park, Camp Raanana is the perfect place for campers to explore new interests, gain self-confidence, build Jewish identity, and have fun outside. The camp offers nine one-week sessions each summer and provides swim lessons, arts & crafts, music, Judaics, nature exploration, sports, free swim, Shabbat celebrations, and weekly special events or all-camp field trips.

This year's all-camp field trips will include Summit on the Park Water Park, Northfork Farms and Outback, Splash Universe, Cranbrook Institute of Science, Howell Nature Center, the Detroit Zoo, Jump City, Romulus Athletic Center, and Henry Ford Museum. Camp Raanana will also be hosting the popular Israel Scouts Friendship Caravan for a visit to camp and a spectacular evening performance at the JCC on July 28. The annual Shabbat at the Lake celebration will be held the evening of August 13 and will feature performances by all the camper groups.

At Camp Raanana, campers entering grades K–2 enjoy the benefits of experienced and nurturing counselors and enriching activity sessions, including Red Cross swim lessons three times a week. Campers entering grades 3–5 participate in Camp Raanana's swim lessons and other activity offerings, and also choose an enriching specialty each week; this year's specialties options include Boating, Digital Photography, Martial Arts, Lego Mania, Yoga, Drama, Drumming, Clay Creations, World of Sports, Edible Art, Dance, Magic, Jazzy Jewelry, and Silly Science. Campers entering grades 6-8 participate in Camp Raanana's Pioneer Adventure Program, featuring exciting field trips and fun mitzvah projects each week. Camp Raanana also offers a CIT program for entering 9th and 10th graders.

This year's camp season will run from June 21 to August 20. Camp brochures are available at the JCC and at www.CampRaanana.com. The registration deadline is June 1, but families are encouraged to register in advance to reserve their space and take advantage of savings opportunities. Families that register by March 15 will be eligible for early bird rates, and those that register by May 3 will be entered in a raffle for a free week of camp and other prizes. Camp Raanana is also happy to provide scholarships to families who need financial assistance; scholarship applications are due by April 15.

To RSVP for the March 14 camp registration event, contact Camp Director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990. ■

Camp Raanana hiring staff for 2010

Camp Raanana, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor's outdoor summer day camp, has several staff openings for this summer. Counselor-in-training positions are available for teens who have completed 8th or 9th grade, junior counselor positions are available for teens who have completed 10th, 11th, or 12th grade; and head counselor and specialist positions are available for college and post-college students.

The Counselor-in-Training program is a fun and supportive program for teens who have completed 8th or 9th grade and are making the transition from camper to counselor. CITs receive training and hands-on experience in child development, leadership and team-building, conflict resolution, program planning, and first aid. CITs also get to participate in social activities and special field trips. Teens may register for one or both four-week CIT sessions ($360 for the initial four-week session, $60 for a second four-week session) and will receive an honorarium for their work upon successful completion of the program. Teens must fill out an application and meet with the camp director to receive approval to enter the program. Accepted applicants will be required to attend several pre-camp training sessions in June.

Teens who have completed 10th, 11th, or 12th grade are eligible to work as junior counselors at camp. This is a paid position which requires a four or eight week commitment. Camp Raanana's junior counselors work directly with a group head counselor who acts as a mentor and involves the junior counselor in planning and implementing all camp activities. Junior counselors must have previous experience in a camp setting and be able to attend several pre-camp training sessions in June.

Camp Raanana is also seeking mature and talented individuals to fill several eight-week head counselor and specialist positions. Applicants for these positions must have completed at least one year of college (or equivalent), have previous experience in a camp setting, and be able to attend several pre-camp training sessions in June. Positions available may include arts & crafts specialist, sports specialist, nature specialist, special needs coordinator, aftercare coordinator, general counselor, and middle school travel group counselor.

For more information about working at Camp Raanana or to request an application, contact Camp Director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990.

Camp Raanana introduces new assistant director

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor has hired Shoshana Jackson as the Camp Raanana assistant director for the 2010 camp season. Camp Raanana is the JCC's outdoor summer day camp for children entering grades K–8.

Shoshana Jackson

Jackson brings a wide range of Judaic and camping experiences to her role as Camp Raanana's assistant director. She grew up in Ann Arbor and was involved with many of the city's Jewish congregations during her youth, including Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, Chabad House, and the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. She later attended college in Florida, receiving a liberal arts degree from Broward College.

Since returning to Ann Arbor several years ago, Jackson has taken a number of education courses through Eastern Michigan University and has been teaching religious school at Temple Beth Emeth and the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. She is in her second year as the head teacher for the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah and her fifth consecutive year teaching for Temple Beth Emeth. Jackson has also attended a number of Jewish education and camping conferences, including the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education and the American Camping Association conferences.

Jackson's camping experience includes three summers at Camp Deer Trails, a residential Girl Scouts camp located in Harrison, Michigan. She served as a unit head counselor during her first year with the camp and was promoted to assistant director for her second and third summers. Her previous experience with supervising and training camp staff, planning camp programs and activities, and leading overnight camping trips at Camp Deer Trails will serve her well as the Camp Raanana assistant director this summer.

Jackson is excited to return to the camping world after taking last summer off to spend with her newborn son. She is particularly excited to finally combine the two loves of her professional life – camping and Jewish education – in one position. Jackson will be working with Camp Director Deborah Huerta, Waterfront Director Kim Braun, Assistant Waterfront Director Lauren Nilsson, and the rest of Camp Raanana's staff to make summer 2010 a great experience for camp families.

Pictures and bios of all the camp staff will be posted at www.CampRaanana.com later in the spring. Registration forms, brochures, and further details about the camp are also available on the website. For more information about Camp Raanana, contact camp director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990.

JCC Youth Programs

Deborah Huerta, special to the WJN

JCC seeks teen athletes for 2010 JCC Maccabi Games

Each summer the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor sends a team of athletes ages 13–16 to the JCC Maccabi Games, an Olympic-style sporting competition that incorporates community service and social activities to combine for an unforgettable experience for Jewish teens.

Emma Share, who participated as a dancer in both the 2008 and 2009 JCC Ann Arbor Maccabi Teams, had this to say about her experience last summer: "The 2009 San Antonio Maccabi experience was amazing. There is just something cool about being part of a week long event where you're competing with, hanging out, and befriending Jews your age. Maccabi is a place where you can be proud of your Jewishness and the city you are from. It's amazing to be able to represent Ann Arbor in a city as big as San Antonio filled with athletes from across the nation. And the three Israeli athletes who joined the Ann Arbor delegation this year made the experience truly special… I would recommend Maccabi to any Jewish teen who likes to have new adventures, have a lot of fun, and make long-lasting memories."

This summer, Ann Arbor's athletes will once again be joined by Israeli athletes from Nahalal, and the combined team will attend the JCC Maccabi Games in Omaha, Nebraska, from August 1–6, 2010. At the Omaha Games, teens will be able to compete in basketball, soccer, volleyball, bowling, baseball, dance, golf, swimming, table tennis, or tennis. Athletes of all abilities are welcome to participate and scholarship assistance is available to help defray the costs of attending the Games. Teens must be 13–16 years old as of July 31 to participate.

For more information about participating as an athlete, coach, or volunteer, contact JCC youth director Deborah Huerta at deborahhuerta@jccfed.org or 971-0990. A limited number of spots on the team are available each year, so interested families are encouraged to contact the JCC as soon as possible.

March School's Out / JCC's In Days

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor will offer two School's Out/JCC's In programs this March. On Monday, March 8, a School's Out day will be offered for Ann Arbor Public Schools students and on Friday, March 19, a School's Out day will be offered for Hebrew Day School students. On both days, students can enjoy fun spring-themed crafts and a special animal presentation by the Leslie Science Center. Students should bring a nut free, dairy lunch and appropriate clothing for playing outside.

The JCC's School's Out programs run from 8 a.m.–6 p.m. and are open to JCC members only in grades K–5; middle school students may also participate as helpers for a reduced fee. The cost is $36 for care from 8 a.m.–4 p.m. ($32 for additional siblings) and $10 for Extended Care from 4–6 p.m. Registration for the March 8 School's Out day is due by March 4, and registration for the March 19 School's Out day is due by March 16.

New JCC Youth Enrichment Classes Begin

The JCC is planning an exciting schedule of afterschool classes for the March–April session. Youth Enrichment classes for elementary students will run for 6 weeks, beginning Friday, March 5, and continuing through the week of April 26. These fun and stimulating afternoon classes run from 4:20–5:20 p.m. and are open to both JCC members and non-members. Snack and supervision in the JCC's afterschool programs before each class are included for all class participants.

On Mondays, a Junior Fit Kids class will be offered for students in grades K-2. The class will be taught by Hebrew Day School gym teacher Kim Braun and will feature energetic games and healthy snacks after each class.

Also on Mondays, there will be a Mixed Media Art class for students in grades 1–5. Art teacher David Cowan will help students make unique sculptures using wire, clay, plaster, and paint.

On Tuesdays, a Drama class will be offered for students in grades 1–5. Jenny Cook brings her extensive theater background and passion for children to this fun class, in which students play drama games, develop a skit, and make costumes and props.

On Wednesdays, a unique class called Innovative Games will be offered for students in grades 2–5. Hebrew Day School gym teacher Kim Braun will help students invent their own games using a few pieces of equipment each week.

On Thursdays, a Yoga class for students in grades K–5 will be offered. Taught by experienced yoga teacher Adele Kieras, this class gives students the opportunity to enjoy warm-up games, learn partner and group poses, and explore breathing techniques.

Also on Thursdays, there will be a Basketball class for students in grades K–5. Benny Margolis leads this fun class, which teaches basketball technique, fun games, teamwork, and life skills.

On Fridays, a Lego Robotics class will be offered for students in grades K–3. This class, led by Rocks & Robots staff, allows students to build lego robots and then program their robots using computer software.

In addition to the afterschool enrichment classes at the JCC, a swimming class is offered on Tuesday evenings from 5:30–6:30 p.m. at High Point School. Hebrew Day School gym teacher and Camp Raanana waterfront director Kim Braun teaches this class for swimmers and non-swimmers in grades K–5.

Registration and payment for these classes are due by March 4. Class fees vary.

JCC to Host Kid's Night Out on March 13

Every other month, the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor offers a Kids' Night Out event featuring games, crafts, dinner, and a movie or other special activities. The next Kids' Night Out will be held on Saturday, March 13, from 6:30-10 p.m. at the JCC.

This Kids' Night Out will begin with fun board games, including Monopoly, Rummikub, Sorry, Uno, and many other favorites. In addition to the games, the event will feature a viewing of the movie *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs.* Inspired by the beloved children's book, this animated film follows the story of a town where food falls from the sky like rain. To get in the mood for the movie, participants will enjoy a spaghetti dinner before the film.

Kids' Night Out events are open to JCC members and non-members in grades K-5. The cost for JCC members is $20 (additional siblings: $18). The cost for non-members is $25 (additional siblings: $23). Registrations and payment will be due by Thursday, March 11. Registration forms will be available at the JCC and at www.jccannarbor.org

Snow Days for Grades K–8

The JCC Youth Department will once again offer Snow Day programs this winter. On days when the JCC is able to open but Ann Arbor Public Schools are cancelled due to winter weather conditions, a Snow Day program will be offered from 10 a.m.–6 pm for students in grades K–5; middle school students may participate as helpers for a reduced fee.

Students will enjoy games, gym activities and fun in the snow under the supervision of youth director Deborah Huerta and other available staff. Students should bring a nut free, dairy lunch and appropriate clothes for playing outside (weather permitting).

The Snow Days program is for JCC members only and the program fee is $50 (additional siblings and Kids' Konnection / Kids' Club participants receive discounts). Registration in advance is not required, but parents will be asked to fill out a registration form and submit payment when they arrive. ■

For more information and registration for all JCC youth programs, contact Deborah Huerta at 971-0990 or deborahhuerta@jccfed.org.

Camp Gan Israel Open House

Brynie Stiefel, special to the WJN

With recent studies suggesting that summer camp may be one of the greatest opportunities to impact the direction children take in life, second only to schooling; it is no wonder that to Shternie Zwiebel, summer camp is serious business. Director of Camp Gan Israel of Ann Arbor for over ten years, her goal, she says, is not just to keep children busy over the summer break, but to "give (her) full attention to every detail to give the kids the time of their lives."

This entails creating three divisions to provide age appropriate fun, and planning a multifaceted schedule to keep children smiling and learning all summer long. One parent notes, "The hard work of the staff and Shternie is so evident in the fantastic and organized field trips, the special guests that arrive at camp who teach the kids about science, animals, dance and much more and just in the day to day activities and fun the kids have."

But it is not only the sports, overnights, amusement park trips, swimming and other great activities on the schedule that makes each child feel at home, Zwiebel is quick to comment, but the "devotion of the counselors to the camp and each and every camper," and the fusion of so many different children coming from all walks of life. The unique Jewish atmosphere, which instills a love of Judaism and the Jewish people, provides a warm and accepting environment for children to learn, grow, and as parents frequently attest "never fail to come home with smiles on their faces!"

To get a glimpse of what surprises are in store at Camp Gan Israel 2010, all families are welcomed to attend an open house on Sunday, March 14, from 4–6 p.m., at Jump City Ann Arbor (2825 Boardwalk, near Zap Zone.) While children bounce around, parents will get a chance to mingle with old and new families, and learn about the new developments taking place this year at the camp. Snacks and pizza will be available for purchase, and coupons for the summer will be given to everyone who joins in the event. There is a $3 admission fee for all children over the age of two. For bookings or more information, call 995-3276, #15 or visit www.jewmich.com

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Jewish-Muslim study course grounds interfaith dialogue in sacred text

By Sue Fishkoff

BERKELEY, Calif. (JTA)—Judaism is a harsh, exacting faith condemning rebellious children to death by stoning. Islam exhorts Muslims to kill non-believers.

Neither statement, according to many Jewish and Muslim scholars, is true. But they are among the most persistent charges laid at the feet of Judaism and Islam by those who are unfamiliar with the basic holy texts of the other's faith.

Hampered by such ignorance, how can Jews and Muslims engage in real interfaith dialogue?

A new graduate-level course in Berkeley, billed as the first of its kind, aims to rectify this failing, at least for the 40 or so students enrolled.

"Madrasa/Midrasha: Muslim-Jewish Text Study," a nine-week course spearheaded by the Progressive Jewish Alliance and run by the Center for Jewish Studies and the Center for Islamic Studies of the Graduate Theological Union, introduces students of both faiths to the methodologies and foundational content of the Koran, Torah and Talmud.

Each session is co-taught by a Jewish and a Muslim scholar. The course also is open to the public.

The field of Jewish-Muslim dialogue and engagement is growing fast. According to a not-yet-published survey by the Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement in Los Angeles, 13 of 18 groups involved in this work were launched in the past seven years, and six of them in the past two years.

The new Berkeley program stands out from the pack by its focus on rigorous text study. While 50 percent of the interfaith groups surveyed indicated they would like to do comparative study of sacred texts, experts in the field say very few actually engage in such work beyond one workshop, and none do so at the graduate level.

"This Berkeley program is very special," says Rabbi Reuven Firestone of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, which two years ago partnered with the University of Southern California and the Omar Ibn Al-Khattab Foundation to form the Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement.

In January 2009, Firestone co-taught the text study section of a pilot program in joint text study and interfaith relationship-building run by the center and NewGround: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change. The joint text study was conducted similarly to the new Graduate Theological Union course, although it was not part of a graduate level program.

The center is looking for funding to replicate the course for other institutions. Neither Firestone nor organizers of the Berkeley course know of similar initiatives elsewhere.

Instructors in both courses say that bringing together adherents of both faiths in text-centered dialogue defuses some of the tensions that typically crop up in interfaith groups by focusing attention in a third direction: the page of a book.

"The experience of reading a Torah story we know as it appears in the Koran, seeing where it overlaps and differs, is very moving," Firestone says. "It elicits questions. Your dialogue partner becomes the representative of a deeply fascinating religious tradition" rather than someone you're trying to persuade of the rightness of your cause.

At the Berkeley course's first meeting February 2, Professor Naomi Seidman, director of the Center for Jewish Studies at GTU, shows the class a page from Genesis, demonstrating how one line of Torah might be surrounded by pages of commentary.

> ***When Jews and Muslims explore their sacred texts, they discover deep bonds of intellect and faith.***

"The Torah is always read through the lens of rabbinic literature," she explains.

Flipping to Exodus, she reads the Hebrew, "*Ayin tachat ayin*," and continues in English, "an eye for an eye, that's the 'proof text' that the God of Israel is a vengeful god." In fact, she points out, Judaism never understood that dictum literally, but follows the Talmudic interpretation that such crimes demand appropriate monetary compensation—an interpretation that is at the root of contemporary tort law.

Hatem Bazian, a senior lecturer in Near Eastern and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and Seidman's co-teacher for the night, provided similar insight into the Koran, believed by Muslims to be the word of Allah as revealed to his prophet Muhammad.

Muhammad had four main functions, Bazian begins—prophet, head of state, judge and military commander. One cannot understand a passage from the Koran without determining in which function Muhammad proclaimed it. If he was speaking as a prophet, the ruling has universal applicability, whereas if he was speaking as a judge, it might apply only to the case before him.

Misapplying such rulings can lead to grave wrongs, Bazian suggests, such as nation-states that don't protect the rights of all citizens.

Munir Jiwa, founding director of the GTU's Center for Islamic Studies, says that when Jews and Muslims explore their sacred texts, they discover deep bonds of intellect and faith—for example, shared assumptions about the primacy of religious law that is absent from Christianity. This can bring them closer as two minorities in a Christian-dominated culture.

When Bazian discussed an Islamic ruling on ablutions after touching one's genitalia during the first evening's class, the Jewish students "didn't think it was weird," Jiwa points out, because Judaism, too, regulates bodily functions via religious rituals.

"This course allows us to struggle with our texts in a scholarly way, as well as faith practitioners," he says. "People walked out that first night amazed by the commitment to learning they saw in each faith."

Hatice Yildiz, a doctoral student at GTU who wears a hijab, or head covering, proclaiming her a religious Muslim, says she didn't know the Talmud was the basic source for Jewish law. She says she's taking the course "because I have a lot to learn about Judaism."

Her friend and fellow doctoral student Uzma Husaini agrees.

"Because of all the tensions between Muslims and Jews due to politics, it's important for us to build bridges," Husaini says. "In order to do that, we have to learn what are our similarities and differences." ■

Free speech at issue in campus Israel wars

By Ben Harris

NEW YORK (JTA)—In the wake of the arrests of 11 University of California, Irvine students for disrupting a speech by the Israeli ambassador to the United States, Shalom Elcott, the president and chief executive of the Jewish Federation of Orange County, Calif., threw down the gauntlet.

UC-Irvine has long been caught in the thicket of the Israel wars, its campus notorious in the pro-Israel community for the intensity and often confrontational quality of discourse on the Middle East. But while some Jewish groups have pushed the administration to condemn inflammatory speakers sponsored by Muslim students, the university previously had been willing only to issue generic condemnations of hate speech on campus.

This time, the Jewish community will "intensely monitor" the response of the university, Elcott told JTA.

"While it's nice to condemn hate speech in general, we expect a very specific response from the University of California leadership based on what transpired in that room," he said.

In addition to prosecuting the students "to the fullest extent of the law," Elcott told JTA he expects future activities of the Muslim Students Union to be closely scrutinized and would like to see their programming stripped of public funding.

Civil discourse on college campuses, or the lack thereof, has been a source of concern for some time. But two distinct strategies are now taking shape, seemingly informed by the recourse available to both sides.

Jewish groups increasingly are pressing their case directly with universities and relevant government agencies, serving notice to university leaders and major donors that they expect strict enforcement of campus codes of conduct. Some even have sought to have speakers disinvited whose views are deemed beyond the pale.

Meanwhile, Israel's critics have stepped up efforts to actively disrupt speakers defending the Jewish state. The differing tactics in many ways reflect the methods that Israelis and Palestinians, by virtue of their power differential, have been led to adopt in their own confrontations.

Jewish groups, possessed of greater political and financial strength, have sought to exert pressure on an institutional level, seeking governmental investigations and leveraging relationships with university officials and their deep-pocketed supporters. Pro-Palestinian groups, generally outmatched at that game, have employed methods more reminiscent of guerrilla politics—disrupting speeches, creating political theater on campuses and being arrested.

On Tuesday, the Zionist Organization of America called for donors to stop supporting UC-Irvine and for Jewish students not to apply there.

Such tactics have surfaced at other campuses as well. The Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement protesting an appearance scheduled for Tuesday night at New York University by Richard Goldstone, the South African Jewish jurist whose report on Israel's conduct of the 2008 Gaza war sparked vitriolic condemnations. In Philadelphia, several pro-Israel activists protested the decision by the Hillel chapter at the University of Pennsylvania to host an event organized by the group J Street, which backs U.S. pressure on Israel and the Palestinians. And across the state, in Pittsburgh, the roles were reversed: Local J Street supporters initiated a campaign to stop the Hillel chapter from hosting a speech by Israeli hard-liner Effi Eitam.

"There was a tremendous amount of pressure put on this organization, on a variety of levels, in an attempt to force us to cancel the event," said Aaron Weil, the local Hillel director in Pittsburgh.

For their part, pro-Palestinian students have repeatedly disrupted speeches by Israeli speakers, including one last week by Israel's deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, at Oxford University. At UCLA, a coalition of pro-Palestinian student groups affixed duct tape to their mouths and disrupted a lecture by another Israeli official on the same night as Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren was nearly shouted down at Irvine. And at the University of Chicago, hecklers made it exceedingly difficult for former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to speak in October, interrupting his talk repeatedly with cries of "war criminal."

Even as they seek to disrupt Israeli speakers, the pro-Palestinian students are being cast, by themselves and by some supporters, as representing the cause of free speech.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council has called for an investigation into the arrests at the UC-Irvine campus of the students who disrupted Oren's talk. A spokesperson for the group, Edina Lekovic, told JTA it was unclear exactly what law the students broke and that there appeared to be a "selected application" of university policy.

Lekovic declined to comment directly on the acceptability of disrupting a public university lecture. But the Muslim Council's executive director, Salam Al-Marayati, seemed to defend those arrested, saying in a statement that the students "had the courage and conscience to stand up against aggression."

The students, Al-Marayati said, were exercising their First Amendment rights.

UC-Irvine's Muslim Student Union has maintained publicly that notwithstanding that its president, Mohamed Abdelgany, was among those arrested, the group did not orchestrate the disruptions. The MSU, however, has not condemned the disruptions either, even though it has long been a target of the ZOA—a campaign the student group has described as an effort to obstruct its right to free expression.

"It is ironic that the university would honor the representative of a country that brazenly stands 'above the law' and punish the students who would rightfully protest his presence as a representative of Israel's illegal and inhumane policies, including documented war crimes," Hadeer Soliman, the MSU spokesperson, said in an e-mail.

Hillel President Wayne Firestone joined the Ocean County federation in its call for a harsh reaction from the university. Firestone, who in 2008 presided over a discussion in Washington about civil discourse that featured UC-Irvine Chancellor Michael Drake, said he has been satisfied generally with the administrative response to such incidents. But he would like UC-Irvine to "come down hard" to send a message about the importance of civility on campus.

"I do believe that strong disciplinary procedures by the university, whether or not they're prosecuted criminally, is in order here," Firestone said.

Firestone also condemned efforts within the Jewish community to disinvite or disrupt speakers, saying it makes it harder for the community to press the importance of free speech. ■

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NIF fracas: Defending Israel or destroying democracy?

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA)—A campaign against the New Israel Fund—a U.S.-based organization that funds civil society activists in Israel—has sparked a fierce debate over the limits of free speech, the financing of NGOs, the dictates of loyalty to the state and, ultimately, over the fundamental values of Israel's Zionist democracy.

The questions cut close to the bone on both sides of the ideological divide. For example: Are left-wingers using Zionist money to undermine the foundations of the state? Or, are right-wingers trying to gag nongovernmental organizations critical of Israeli policies and actions? And to what extent are the government and its agencies involved in trying to silence their critics?

At the center of the storm is the Goldstone report on alleged Israeli war crimes during the fighting in Gaza last winter.

Most Israelis see the report as biased, based on flimsy evidence and false assumptions, and part of a concerted international campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state. The attack on the New Israel Fund was part of an angry Israeli backlash against Goldstone. But was it a bona fide attack on an organization accused of undermining Israel's international standing or a premeditated onslaught against civil society?

The campaign against the NIF was conducted by an organization called Im Tirtzu, which describes itself as "an extra-parliamentary movement to strengthen Zionist values" and boasts a video endorsement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It claimed that 16 NIF grantees—among them Physicians for Human Rights and B'Tselem, human rights organizations active in the Palestinian territories; Breaking the Silence, a group of soldiers reporting on Israeli army violations of moral norms; and ACRI, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel—had provided Goldstone with material contributing to false charges against the Israel Defense Forces in informer-like actions that were tantamount to betrayal in a wartime situation.

"The results of these groups' activities caused significant diplomatic damage to Israel and harmed the country's capacity to defend itself militarily," Im Tirtzu said, adding that NIF was largely to blame because it had funded these "anti-Zionist" organizations.

In late January, young Im Tirtzu members dressed as Hamas fighters demonstrated outside the Jerusalem home of NIF President Naomi Chazan waving placards depicting Chazan with a horn emerging from her forehead. The text on the placard read: "Fact! Without the New Israel Fund there could be no Goldstone Report and Israel would not be facing international accusations of war crimes."

The horn was a play on words, the Hebrew "keren" meaning both fund and horn, but critics say it also had obvious anti-Semitic connotations that many found offensive.

Im Tirtzu used the image as well in advertisements placed in several Israeli newspapers.

The Zionist Organization of America has seconded the criticisms of the NIF.

The New Israel Fund says it knows that many of the minority rights groups it backs in the name of empowering the disenfranchised and fighting discrimination in Israel also take positions that the NIF does not endorse, such as calling for an end to Israel's Jewish character. NIF officials say that while they do not agree with everything their grantees do or say, revoking their funding would be inimical to NIF's goal of promoting free speech and strengthening Israel's minorities.

"They're using me to attack in the most blatant way the basic principles of democracy and the values of Israel's declaration of independence; values of equality, tolerance, social justice and freedom of speech," Chazan declared.

In dismissing the Im Tirtzu case against the NIF as baseless, Chazan said that the materials the groups allegedly transferred to Goldstone are mostly in the public domain. And even if they were not, it would be the duty of the groups to pass on what they know—that is their raison d'etre as human rights groups. Far from giving succor to Israel's enemies, the grantees were trying to create a better Israel, Chazan said.

The NIF and its defenders note that its work goes well beyond organizations focusing specifically on Palestinian rights. It also funds civil society groups dealing with a host of domestic Israeli issues, such as providing women's shelters, supporting Ethiopian immigrants and challenging the Orthodox monopoly on Jewish religious practice.

In early February, a group of leading Israeli academics, writers, actors, directors and political activists, including novelists Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, placed a full-page ad in Haaretz expressing "disgust at the campaign of incitement and hatred" being waged against Chazan, the NIF and the organizations it supports.

Several U.S. Jewish groups on the left side of the political spectrum issued their own statements slamming the anti-NIF campaign on similar grounds. The tenor of the anti-NIF campaign was criticized as well by Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League.

In late January, 13 of the 16 NIF grantees slammed by Im Tirtzu fired off a letter to President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin complaining that the Im Tirtzu attack on the NIF was part of a larger pattern encouraged by "senior government officials." In other words, it was more than a one-off campaign by a young, marginal group but part of an anti-democratic trend for which the government was setting the tone.

They gave some examples: Interior Minister Eli Yishai backing claims that organizations which help refugees and asylum seekers "aim to destroy Israel"; Netanyahu denying the legitimacy of Breaking the Silence testimonies on the Gaza war; Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon referring to Israeli human rights organizations as "enemies from within."

Others see the specter of an impending clampdown against civil society.

Anat Hoffman, chair of Women of the Wall and director of the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, an NIF grantee, was questioned and fingerprinted by police in early January after taking part in an all-female prayer session at the Western Wall that involved the use of a Torah. A week later, ACRI director Hagai El-Ad was arrested while monitoring a protest against Jewish settlement in the Arab neighborhood of Sheik Jarrah in eastern Jerusalem, and released as soon as the case went to court.

Were these isolated cases of police folly or part of a pattern dictated from above?

There is no hard evidence to suggest that the Netanyahu government is planning to curb civil society or that the police action had the prime minister's blessing. What is clear is that Netanyahu is deeply concerned by what he calls "Goldstonism"—moves in the international community aimed at delegitimizing Israel.

The prime minister says he sees three existential threats: Iran; a Palestinian state without adequate security arrangements; and rampant Goldstonism. That means that Israeli organizations the government feels contribute to delegitimization of the state could be seen as serious threats to national security. But the government does not seem to be considering operative moves against them.

Moves, however, are afoot in the Knesset.

The Law Committee, headed by Yisrael Beiteinu's David Rotem, whose party has proposed that Israeli citizens take loyalty oaths, has set up a subcommittee to examine the sources of funding of NGOs active in Israel. Some of the committee members aim to ban funding by foreign countries, which is seen as interfering in Israel's internal affairs. Most of that funding is from European countries for left-wing NGOs.

Otniel Schneller of the Kadima Party wants to go a step further, proposing the establishment of a full-fledged parliamentary commission of inquiry to probe the conduct of the NIF and its grantees. Schneller says he is against the absurdity of Israeli civil society "paying organizations like Physicians for Human Rights to slander us," and wants to stop the NIF from supporting anti-Zionist groups.

Schneller's proposal, which he planed to submit, has run into stiff opposition from the left and right.

Left-wing Meretz leader Haim Oron asked who would decide who is a Zionist or what are Israel's best interests. Schneller, he suggested, should fight the left-wing organizations with counter arguments, not try to cut off their funding.

On the right, the Likud's Michael Eitan argued that parliamentary commissions of inquiry are established on non-political issues, such as corruption in soccer or water prices. "It is unheard of for the majority in the Knesset to investigate the minority," he fumed.

Eitan's stand has the support of others in the Likud, like Rivlin and Minister without Portfolio Benny Begin, and it is not clear whether Schneller can muster a majority for his proposal.

Meanwhile, Im Tirtzu's funding also has attracted scrutiny in recent days. Liberal organizations and bloggers have been reporting that Im Tirtzu has received money from the Central Fund of Israel, a U.S.-based nonprofit that has also supported pro-settler organizations and a group that aids militant Israeli Jews accused of carrying out violence. They also note that Im Tirtzu reportedly has received $200,000 over the past two years from John Hagee, an evagelical pastor in San Antonio, Texas, who is staunchly pro-Israel but came under fire for having declared in a sermon that God allowed the Holocaust to happen as part of a plan to bring Jews to Israel.

Hagee has expressed regret for the upset caused by his remarks and promised to be more sensitive in the future. A spokesman for the pastor criticized the tenor of Im Tirtzu's campaign against NIF.

Meanwhile the debate goes on, with each side seeking to claim the mantle of preserving Israel's fundamental nature.

"Today the question is not whether Israel survives, but what kind of Israel survives," said Daniel Sokatch, the NIF's chief executive officer.

Im Tirtzu leader Ronen Shova countered that "The debate is not about left or right. The new debate is between Zionists and non-Zionists." ■

J Street, Oren mending fences—but wariness lingers

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA)–After months of high-profile feuding, the breakout dovish lobbying group J Street and Israel's ambassador to Washington appear to be reconciling.

The two sides have been talking – through the media and directly in private—with the goal of ending the hot-cold feud that dominated much professional Jewish chatter in the latter part of last year.

Both sides say that while there have been strides in the rapprochement, much needs to be bridged–underscored by a persistent Israeli government wariness of the group.

Michael Oren, the Israeli ambassador, dropped J Street a bouquet in a Feb. 10 interview with the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles in which he said that the organization had moved "much more into the mainstream." It marked a sharp turn from his characterization of the group late last year as having positions dangerous to Israeli interests.

"The J Street controversy has come a long way toward resolving," Oren said in the interview. "The major concern with J Street was their position on security issues, not the peace process. J Street has now come and supported Congressman [Howard] Berman's Iran sanction bill; it has condemned the Goldstone report; it has denounced the British court's decision to try Tzipi Livni for war crimes, which puts J Street much more into the mainstream."

Oren's comments come as some pro-Israel activists continue their efforts to marginalize Jewish groups on the left, including J Street, that they see as being hostile to Israel.

The comments were no slip of the lip, said sources close to the ambassador. They were a quid pro quo arising out of recent statements J Street has released, including an admonishment to the United Nations to treat Israel fairly and an endorsement of immediate passage of new U.S. sanctions against Iran.

For its part J Street, which backs U.S. pressure on Israel and the Palestinians in pursuit of a two-state deal, has endeavored to cast the embassy and the Israeli establishment as a friend and an intimate in some recent statements. At a time when some voices on the left were criticizing Israel's rescue mission in Haiti as a cynical ploy to distract attention from continued opprobrium arising from last year's Gaza war, J Street was effusive in its praise.

"Israel's swift response to another nation's needs speaks to the very best of the values underpinning the Jewish tradition and the best of what that country represents as the national home of the Jewish people," J Street said. "It did, in this instance, serve as a real model for the international community. We urge those who might otherwise disagree with Israeli policy and action to commend Israel for reacting so swiftly and making a positive contribution at this time of urgent international need."

continues on next page

J Street, continued from previous page

And this month, when Oren came under verbal assault when he delivered a speech at University of California, Irvine–a hotbed of anti-Israel activism–J Street was calling for civility.

"We believe that universities should be a place for an honest discussion about tough issues," the group said. "While appropriate and respectful protests are a legitimate and important part of the conversation on campus, anti-Semitic, racist, disruptive and inflammatory actions and language are simply unacceptable."

Hadar Susskind, the J Street policy director, said such statements arose out of recent efforts to reconcile after a tense 2009.

"We've been having ongoing discussions with the embassy making clear our different positions," Susskind said. "We've said all along we would welcome a good productive relationship with them."

Officials close to the Israeli Embassy confirmed the conversations.

J Street was established in early 2008. What little relationship it had developed with the embassy was shattered in early 2009 when the organization issued a statement that seemed to blame Israel and Hamas equally for the Gaza war.

Worsening the situation was J Street's position until December that the time was not right yet for sanctions targeting Iran's energy sector, even as many Jewish groups were pushing for such measures. Israel considers containing Iran's nuclear ambitions its signature issue, beyond how it deals with the Palestinians.

Oren, who assumed his post last summer, launched his tenure with a stated policy of reaching out to Jewish groups across the spectrum–and then he pointedly avoided J Street. He declined to attend the group's inaugural conference in October, and in December told a group of Conservative rabbis that J Street's views are dangerous for Israel.

Neither side needed the tension. Oren's description of the group as "dangerous" earned a rebuke from Hannah Rosenthal, the State Department's anti-Semitism envoy–an official with whom he would in theory work closely. Centrist and right-wing Jewish groups closed ranks behind Oren, but the Obama administration made it clear it was not unhappy with Rosenthal's remarks.

J Street has a dependable cadre of 40-50 members of the U.S. House of Representatives ready to heed its voting recommendations. Congressional insiders say J Street's green light in December for Iran sanctions nudged the bill from the super majority that traditional lobbying by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee usually turns out to officially "overwhelming": 412-12. That sent the Obama administration a clear message to hurry it on up, the insiders say.

And J Street, however much its reputation is made on a willingness to take Israel to task, also needs to work with the leadership in Israel in order to maintain any credible claim that its critiques will have an impact. Its first congressional delegation visiting the region this week met with top Palestinian and Jordanian leaders–but in Israel, its top interlocutor was Dan Meridor, one of five deputy prime ministers.

There's a way to go, both sides acknowledge: J Street is not yet on the "must call" list for the embassy when the ambassador calls a meeting of the Jewish leadership.

Centrist and right-wing pro-Israel groups also are watching the developments. J Street earned much pro-Israel resentment at its outset by "punching up"–issuing blistering attacks on groups that were larger and better known such as AIPAC, Christians United for Israel and The Israel Project.

CUFI spokesmen said they welcomed J Street's recent efforts to pull back from such attacks, but noted that as recently as last week, J Street Executive Director Jeremy Ben-Ami maintained that the Christian group hoped to "precipitate" an Armageddon through support for right-wing Israeli policies. CUFI says its pro-Israel work is informed by political, not theological, sympathies for Israel–and in any case, says its theology has no place for sparking the end of the world.

"J Street seems to employ a strategy of publicity through controversy without considering the harm that policy does to the pro-Israel community," CUFI spokesman Ari Morgenstern said.

Gary Erlbaum, a Philadelphia-area property developer who has been a major giver to an array of centrist and right-wing pro-Israel groups, said Oren was being politic where it was unwarranted.

"He's trying to not pick any additional fights, there are enough fights," said Erlbaum, who was among the most vocal critics of the decision by the Hillel at the University of Pennsylvania to rent space to J Street for a recent event. "I don't think J Street has changed its spots. You would think that Israel would be quite defensive about any group that believes that the American government should force Israel to do things that are against its interests."

Top Israeli officials remain wary, as the snub of the congressional delegation shows.

Meeting Tuesday with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon was less than encouraging when asked about J Street.

"The thing that troubles me is that they don't present themselves as to what they really are," Ayalon said in remarks reprinted on the Foreign Ministry Web site. "They should not call themselves pro-Israeli."

That echoed a dismissal dished out earlier this month by Yuli Edelstein, the Diaspora affairs minister, who would not meet with J Street representatives.

"There's a very simple rule, and I leave it with a question mark: If J Street says it is able to represent every government in Israel, maybe they can be a lobby," he said. "If they can't be a lobby, call themselves Young Liberal Jews for whatever, for Better Jewish Communal Life in the United States, and then we'll speak with them."

In fact, a number of pro-Israel groups on the left and right have long been critical of Israeli government policies.

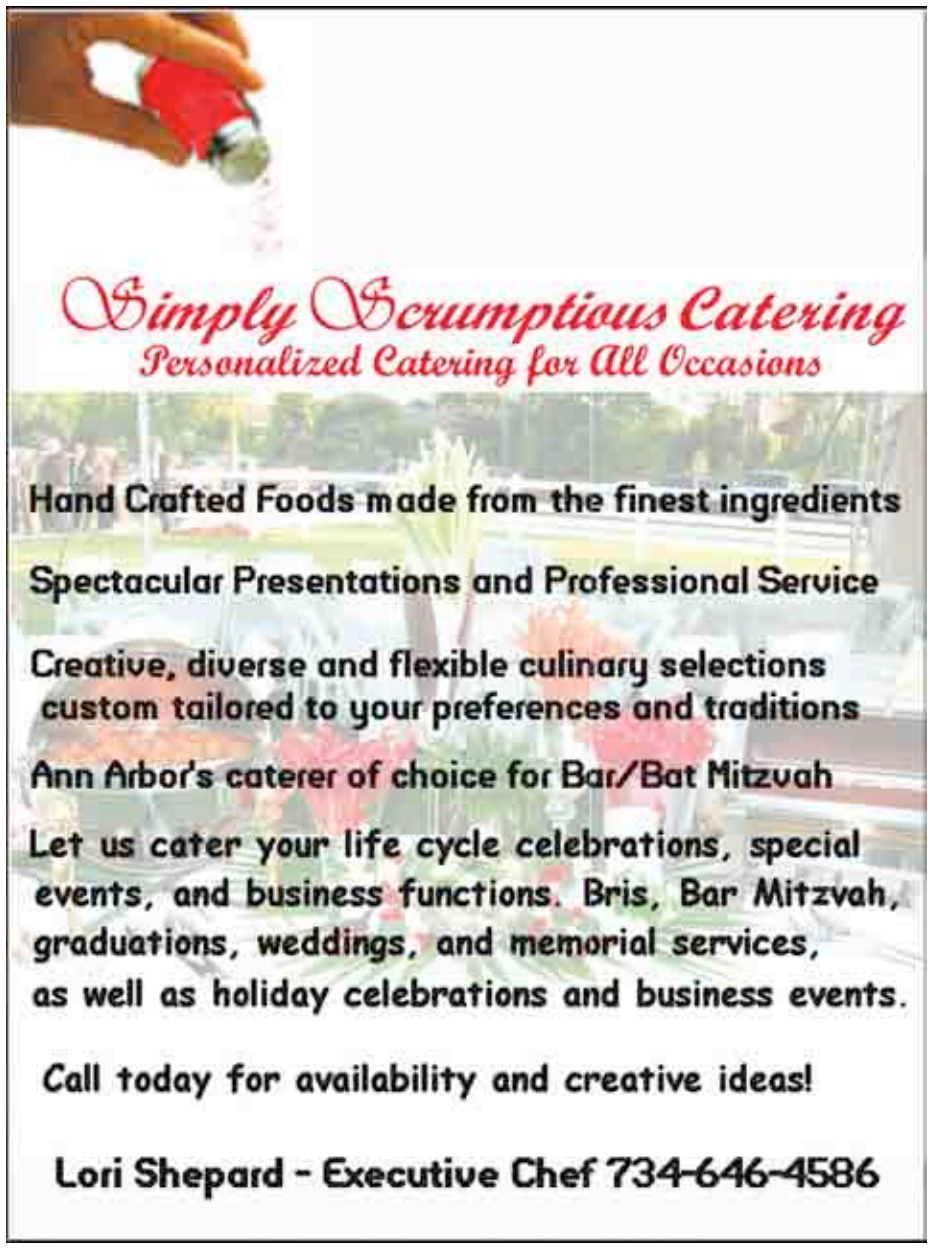
In a statement e-mailed to JTA, Ben Ami said Edelstein was setting an impossible benchmark for any U.S. Jewish group to meet.

"The minister clearly misunderstands what J Street is and how American lobbies that are not agents of foreign governments operate," he said. "We don't claim to, and in fact do not, represent the government of Israel. We explicitly reserve the right to agree with it at times and to disagree with it at times–as we do with the U.S. government.

Such exchanges appear to be diminishing, however.

Susskind, hired by J Street in part because his "establishment" past as Washington director for the umbrella Jewish policy body, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said he anticipated more friendliness going forward.

"I'm very happy to see [Oren's] positive comments," he said. "I'm looking forward to the relationship growing." ■



Eggs: What would Passover be without them?

By Linda Morel

NEW YORK (JTA)—I start Passover food shopping by buying six dozen eggs, but it's never enough. Inevitably I return to the store at least twice, purchasing two or three more cartons of eggs each time.

Matzah garners most of the attention in Passover fare because of the unleavened bread's prominent role in the Exodus story. Eggs, however, are the unsung heroes, working behind the scenes, enhancing nearly every recipe consumed during the holiday's eight days.

Without fanfare, eggs perform the binding and heavy lifting usually accomplished by flour, the silky powder ground from cereal grains that are forbidden during Passover.

With great prowess, eggs hold together the ingredients that go into Passover kugels, matzah brie and matzah farfel casseroles.

When egg whites are whipped to a frenzy with electric beaters, they increase in volume six to eight times, lending structure and leavening to many baked goods. Egg whites single-handedly add loft to cakes and other pastries, encouraging them to rise without a boost from the usual sources—flour and baking soda.

Eggs play a pivotal role during seders. Spherical and white, they symbolize the rebirth that occurs in the spring. Every seder plate reserves a place to display a roasted egg to remind us of the burnt offerings, the daily roasted sacrifices in the Temple. These sacrifices can no longer be offered because the Temple was destroyed centuries ago.

In addition, the roasted egg on the seder plate is a symbol of the new life the Jewish people acquired in attaining their freedom from Egyptian bondage.

During seder ceremonies all over the world, Jews consume an egg course. Ashkenazim partake in eggs that have been hard boiled and chilled. During the seder they pour heavily salted water over the eggs, a symbol of the tears shed by our ancestors during slavery.

As a child, I looked forward each spring to the taste of hard-boiled eggs in a salty bath. When I was 12, I prepared the combination for lunch one day during October. But as I took a bite of boiled egg doused in salty water, it tasted so terrible I couldn't eat it. I was crushed by the disappointment and concluded at that young age that you have to wait for Passover to appreciate this special dish resonating with so much history.

During Passover, many Sephardim eat an egg dish called Huevos Haminados in Spanish, or oven eggs. The recipe is prepared by layering eggs among onion skins and coffee grinds in a pot of water. The mixture is then warmed in the oven on a low temperature for many hours. This slow cooking method not only gives egg yolks a satiny texture, but also turns their shells a splendid brown color, reminiscent of roasted eggs.

Many Huevos Haminados recipes suggest saving the skins from the onions used in Passover cooking. However, I find that method does not produce a large enough yield. In preparation for making Huevos Haminados, I go from supermarket to supermarket collecting skins from bins of onions. The skins of red onions lend the most gorgeous color.

Every spring my husband worries that I will be accused of shoplifting for this practice. So far, cashiers have given me nothing more than strange looks when I point out a bag full of onion skins.

While Passover is perhaps the most cherished of Jewish holidays, for many people the sheer volume of eggs used in recipes poses health issues, specifically regarding the amount of cholesterol consumed. There are several ways to be health conscious while observing the egg's role during seders.

The yolk is the culprit, containing all the egg's cholesterol and fat (about 5 grams in a large egg). With only about 20 calories, the egg white consists of water and slightly more than half the egg's protein.

For the seder's egg course, I recommend preparing large eggs. Ironically, large eggs are the smallest size available commercially, followed by extra large and jumbo.

Another way to cut down on cholesterol is to slice hard-boiled eggs in half, thus limiting portion size. For those who want to get fancy, place a tiny dollop of caviar on each half. Cover the halves with plastic wrap before serving, so the yolks don't dry out.

For a cholesterol-free egg course, serve egg white omelets. I suggest stirring some chopped parsley into the beaten egg whites to give them spring color. This also adds the symbol of Passover greenery. Of course, egg white omelets can be served for breakfast, brunch or lunch throughout Passover.

When it comes to matzah casseroles made with vegetables or fruit, you can eliminate one or two of the egg yolks called for in recipes. Add an egg white for each yolk you discard.

Of course the highlight of any seder is a rich chocolate cake, made lofty and moist by a bevy of luscious eggs. If you're counting calories or cholesterol, dessert is the one place to splurge with an abundance of eggs. To balance a cake's opulence, serve it with fresh strawberries.

During Passover's eight days, I often return to the supermarket for additional ingredients. I end up making more macaroons, either coconut or chocolate almond; matzah brei, either mushroom or classic; Passover lasagna, with or without meat; or my signature dish, peach kugel. These recipes wouldn't exist without the most ubiquitous ingredient in all of Passover cooking—eggs.

Huevos haminados (oven eggs)

(Pareve)

Prepared entirely in the oven, these eggs turn sepia brown and are served at Sephardic seders as the egg course.

A 4-quart ovenproof pot that you don't care about, as it may get stained, or a deep ovenproof glass casserole of equal size.

- 4 cups of tightly packed onion skins
- 12 eggs at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons coffee grinds
- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt

1. Preheat oven to 250°.
2. Place half of the onion skins at the bottom of the pot or casserole. Nestle the eggs between the skins. Don't crowd them. Sprinkle coffee grinds over eggs. Add oil, vinegar and salt. Slowly pour enough water inside to submerge the mixture, about 2 or 3 quarts.
3. If using a pot, cover it with the lid. If using a casserole without a lid, cover it tightly with aluminum foil. Place eggs in the oven for 6-8 hours.
4. Remove pot carefully. Lift out eggs using a long-handled slotted spoon and place them temporarily on paper towels to drain off excess water. Eggs can be served hot or refrigerated for later.

Yield: 12 servings

Vegetarian passover lasagna

(Pareve or Dairy)
2 (10-by-15-inch) ovenproof pans
No-stick cooking spray
2 vegetable bouillon cubes
6 tablespoons olive oil, or more, if needed
2 large onions, sliced
Kosher salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
9 pieces of commercially prepared matzah
2 zucchinis sliced into circles about 1/8-inch thick
6 garlic cloves, minced
2/3 cup Parmesan cheese, optional
1 pound of mushrooms, sliced
3 dried sage leaves, crushed
2 large pinches of dried rosemary needles
6 eggs
Juice from half a lemon

1. Coat 1 baking pan with cooking spray and reserve. In second baking pan, dissolve bouillon cubes in 3 cups of boiling water and reserve. Preheat oven to 350°.

2. In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil on a medium flame. Add onions and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Sauté until onion slices wilt, about 5 minutes. Move onions to prepared pan and distribute evenly.

3. Submerge 3 squares of matzah into bouillon bath until barely softened. Gently lift matzah pieces one at a time. Cover onion layer with the first 2 pieces of matzah. Break the third piece in half to fill in the edges on one side. (Don't worry if matzah falls apart slightly. But if it completely disintegrates, soften additional pieces.)

4. To the skillet, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add zucchini and half the garlic, sprinkling lightly with salt and pepper. Saute until wilted, about 5 minutes. Cover matzah layer with zucchini mixture. Sprinkle 1/3 cup of Parmesan cheese on top, if using.

5. Repeat Step 3 and cover zucchini layer with 3 pieces of matzah.

6. To the skillet, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add mushrooms and remaining garlic, sprinkling lightly with salt and pepper, plus sage and rosemary. Saute until mushrooms wilt, about 5 minutes. Cover second matzah layer with mushroom mixture. Sprinkle 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese on top, if using.

7. Repeat Step 3 and cover mushroom layer with 3 pieces of matzah.

8. In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs until foamy. Add lemon juice and 1 cup of bouillon and beat again. Pour egg mixture over the top of the lasagna. With a spatula, press down on the lasagna to even out liquids. Bake until lasagna is firmly set and bubbles at the edges, about 45 minutes. Recipe can be served immediately or made 2 days ahead, refrigerated, and reheated. Recipe freezes well. Yield: 24 squares

Passover peach kugel

(Pareve or Dairy)
No-stick vegetable spray
2 cups apple juice
2/3 cup dried cherries
2 (15-ounce) cans sliced peaches
No-stick vegetable spray
3 pieces of matzah, broken into 1-inch squares
6 eggs
Zest and juice from half a lemon
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
2/3 cup chopped walnuts
4 tablespoons margarine or butter, melted

1. Coat a 9-by-13-inch ovenproof baking pan with no-stick spray. Preheat oven to 350°

2. In a small pot, heat 1 cup of apple juice to a simmer. Remove from flame. Stir in dried cherries and soak them while assembling remaining ingredients.

3. Place a colander over a large bowl. Drain the peaches, reserving the liquid from the can in the bowl. Dice peaches.

4. In a medium-sized pot, heat the remaining apple juice to a simmer. Remove from flame. Soak broken matzah squares in apple juice until soft, about 5 minutes. Using the colander, drain matzah and discard the juice. Reserve.

5. With an electric beater, whip eggs until frothy. Add lemon zest and juice, sugar and salt, and beat until well combined.

6. Drain the cherries and add them to the egg mixture, along with the peaches and walnuts. On a low speed, mix until incorporated. With a wooden spoon, add soaked matzah and gently stir until incorporated.

7. Move mixture to prepared pan and spread evenly. Pour 1/3 cup of the reserved peach juice evenly over the top. Drizzle the melted margarine or butter over the surface. Kugel will look quite liquid. Place kugel in the oven and bake for 45 minutes, or until edges brown and a tester inserted in the middle comes out clean. Serve immediately or cool to room temperature, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for a day. Cut into squares before serving. Kugel tastes delicious with sour cream.

Yield: 18 squares

Mocha pecan torte

(Pareve)
No-stick cooking spray
7 egg whites
1 cup pecans
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate bits
1 tablespoon instant espresso coffee
3/4 cup sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 9-inch springform baking pan with cooking spray.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat egg whites until firm. Don't overbeat or whites will become watery. Reserve.

3. In a food processor, using a metal blade, grind pecans and chocolate bits until broken into small pieces. Mix in coffee and sugar until blended. Fold mixture into egg whites, and by hand gently stir with a spatula until well blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 40-45 minutes, or until cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool to room temperature and serve with sliced strawberries sprinkled with sugar and drops of lemon juice, or Coffee Whipped Cream (recipe below).

Yield: 10-12 slices

Coffee whipped cream

(Dairy)
1 pint heavy cream
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon instant espresso coffee

Place the ingredients in a large mixing bowl and beat with an electric mixer until cream forms firm peaks. Stop machine every minute or so to avoid overbeating and turning the cream to butter. To check for firm peaks, lift beaters from mixture. Serve immediately.

A good egg—safety and nutrition tips

1. Buy the freshest eggs possible by purchasing them before the sell-by date.
2. Before purchasing eggs, examine them for cracks to avoid bacteria from getting inside. Gently roll around each egg within the carton. If an egg won't budge, chances are the bottom is cracked and has leaked, gluing the shell in place.
3. Always purchase eggs from a refrigerated case. Avoid cartons at the front of the case because they have been exposed to warmer air each time the case was opened.
4. At home, refrigerate eggs immediately. It's preferable to store them in their cartons at the back of the refrigerator so they are not exposed to room temperature air every time the refrigerator is opened.
5. Refrigerate cooked eggs within an hour after preparation. They should be consumed within a week.
6. Although recipes abound for raw eggs, they are still considered unsafe to eat by many health experts who warm against salmonella poisoning.
7. To improve whipping ability, keep raw eggs at room temperature for 20 minutes (but no longer) before beating them.
8. When separating eggs, it's preferable to keep all traces of yolks from the whites so the whites can reach the maximum volume during beating. However, a speck of yolk will not ruin your chance of producing frothy egg whites.
9. Eggs are easiest to separate when cold. While egg separators, available wherever kitchenware is sold and at many supermarkets, keep yolks from whites, they take longer than the old-fashioned method of pouring whites into a bowl.
10. The stringy stuff inside an egg anchors the yolk in the center of the white. It is not an imperfection or a beginning embryo. The more prominent the stringy stuff, the fresher the egg. It does not interfere with cooking or the beating of an egg white.
11. Eggs with a visible blood spot on the yolk are safe for consumption. These tiny red spots are caused by the rupture of a blood vessel during the egg's formation. While in the past, the consumption of eggs with blood spots was forbidden by the laws of kashrut, because these spots were the beginning of an embryo, modern production methods have improved and this is no longer the case. Blood spots found in commercially produced eggs today do not present any fundamental problems for kosher consumers. However, many followers of kashrut continue to discard eggs with blood spots.
12. Organic eggs are produced by hens fed with certified grains, minus most conventional pesticides and fertilizers. Growth hormones and antibiotics are prohibited. Organic eggs are more expensive than regular eggs because it costs farmers more to allow their hens to roam outside of cages and to give them organic feed. However, organic eggs have the same nutritional content, fat and cholesterol as regular eggs.
13. Brown eggs are equally as nutritious as white eggs. The color of the shell is determined by the breed of hen.
14. Make sure your refrigerator is 40 degrees. If the temperature is colder, eggs may freeze. Eggs that have been frozen should be discarded as they don't perform well in cooking. If the temperature is warmer than 40, your eggs will not last as long as they would in a colder environment.
15. When properly stored, eggs rarely spoil. However, as an egg ages, the white becomes thinner, the yolk gets flatter and the yolk membrane weakens. Although these changes affect appearance, they don't indicate spoilage and don't greatly affect the nutritional value of the egg or its ability to perform in recipes. Before spoiling, an old egg is more likely to dry up. But like all organic matter, eggs can go bad. Telltale signs are a sour or fruity odor and a blue-green color. If in doubt, discard a suspicious egg. It's not worth the risk of getting sick.

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MARCH EVENTS

One-Hour Family Performances!
Cyro Baptista's Beat the Donkey

Sat, Mar 13 | 1 PM & 4 PM
POWER CENTER

Kids of all ages will go wild for Brazilian percussionist Cyro Baptista's Beat the Donkey and their outrageous costumes, torrid rhythms and spontaneous dance. Baptista directs the group's bewitching brew of untamed percussion, samba, jazz, tap dance, martial arts, rock and funk with fiendish glee. A little piece of Brazilian Carnaval!

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Takács Quartet

Mon, Mar 15 | 8 PM
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM

PROGRAM
Beethoven String Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 18, No. 6
Psathas A Cool Wind
Beethoven String Quartet in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1

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Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis

Wed, Mar 17 | 8 PM
HILL AUDITORIUM

The incomparable trumpeter Wynton Marsalis leads the Jazz at Lincoln Center big band in selections from band member Ted Nash's new jazz suite entitled *Portrait in Seven Shades* as well as other repertoire, including tunes by Count Basie, Mary Lou Williams and more.

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San Francisco Symphony

Michal Tilson Thomas conductor
Christan Tetzlaff violin

Fri, Mar 19 | 8 PM
HILL AUDITORIUM

PROGRAM
Kissine New Work Commissioned by SFS (2009)
Tchaikovsky Violin Concert in D Major, Op. 35 (1878)
Ravel Valses nobles et sentimentales (1912)
Liszt Symphonic Poem No. 2: Tasso – Lament and Triumph, S. 96 (1849)

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San Francisco Symphony

with the UMS Choral Union
Michal Tilson Thomas conductor
Laura Claycomb soprano
Katarina Karnéus mezzo-soprano

Sat, Mar 20 | 8 PM
HILL AUDITORIUM

PROGRAM
Mahler Symphony No. 2 in c minor ("Resurrection") (1888-94)

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MEDIA PARTNER **WGTE 91.3 FM.**

Chekov's *Uncle Vanya*
Maly Drama Theater of St. Petersburg

Lev Dodin artistic director

Wed, Mar 24 [STUDENT PERFORMANCE]
Thu-Sat, Mar 25-27 8 PM
Sun, Mar 28 2 PM
POWER CENTER

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Solo Violin Works of J.S. Bach
Julia Fischer violin

Wed-Thu, Mar 24-25 | 8 PM
RACKHAM AUDITORIUM

PROGRAM (WED 3/24)
J.S. Bach Sonata No. 1 in g minor, BWV 1001 (1720)
J.S. Bach Sonata No. 2 in a minor, BWV 1003 (1720)
J.S. Bach Sonata No. 3 in C Major, BWV 1005 (1720)

PROGRAM (THU 3/25)
J.S. Bach Partita No. 3 in E Major, BWV 1006 (1720)
J.S. Bach Partita No. 1 in b minor, BWV 1002 (1720)
J.S. Bach Partita No. 2 in d minor, BWV 1004 (1720)

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Debbie Gombert, music therapist and teacher

Sandor Slomovits, staff writer

This month we'll meet a member of our community whose work is in yet another aspect of music. Debbie Gombert teaches music in a variety of settings, from recorder classes at Hebrew Day School and at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts, to leading and teaching songs to the children at the JCC's Early Childhood Center twice a week. She also leads the klezmer band at HDS. But her primary focus is music therapy, and even in her traditional teaching roles she brings her training in that field, plus her related life experiences, to bear on all she does in her work.

Gombert: My degree is in music therapy from EMU. Right now I'm working on my research project for my masters degree. Most of my work outside of the JCC and HDS is in music therapy. I work with children with special needs. In music therapy, the goals are not necessarily learning music for music's sake, but perhaps speech goals, or self-regulation goals, learning how to stop when Mom says stop, or perhaps social interaction goals, sharing instruments. I mostly work with children who either have speech, language delays or have autism. I also have a group of older adults who I work with at the AME Church in Ypsilanti. They have early stages of dementia. There the goals are reminiscence, some motor activity, in some cases getting up and dancing. There is a man there who can't walk and has a hard time getting up. One day I turned on a song and asked, "Who wants to dance?" He also has very limited speech. He stood up faster than I've ever seen him stand up before and said, "I do." (Laughter)

WJN: He can't walk, but he can dance.

Gombert: It was really wonderful. He was clearly dancing, but he was not moving his feet. And he was clearly leading me, although he has very limited use of his arms. What a wonderful self esteem thing for this gentleman, who is in his late seventies, early eighties, who has a lot of physical issues, to be able to lead a young lady dancing. I tell you, when I'm dancing with them, they go back to their twenties, and I do too. (Laughter)

Sometimes people call me a music teacher, and yes, one of the things I do is teach music. But I think I approach my teaching as a music therapist. I'm very aware when I'm at the JCC Early Childhood Center that yes, I'm teaching the kids songs. And the reason I teach them songs is because that's part of their Jewish identity. I'm helping establish their identity. And when I work with the klezmer band, part of why I do it is that music is part of my identity. I was playing in my grandmother's klezmer band, after I'd been playing flute for only a year. That music and that sound is definitely part of my identity.

I teach recorder to the fourth graders at HDS. I've used a variety of recorder books in teaching, but there I settled on one that's all Israeli folk melodies. I also teach recorder and a little bit of flute at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts. Usually there I teach traditional recorder, beginning recorder. And I say usually, because whenever I teach or do anything musical I'm looking to see what else it is touching.

WJN: What in your background brought you to this? Has this been your lifelong work?

Gombert: My first career was as a computer scientist. I have a masters degree in computer science. There's a logical, systematic side to me. (Laughter) My first undergrad degree was in math at the University of Wisconsin.

WJN: Is that where you grew up?

Gombert: I grew up in New Jersey, in Roosevelt, a town of 270 families. There was one synagogue and no churches. I used to feel sorry for the people who went to church because it wasn't in town. Roosevelt had been started as a farming community during Roosevelt's administration. It used to be chicken farms and then it evolved into an artists community. Ben Shahn had a studio there, and others. My grandmother was the town musician. She was born in Germany. She got out in '38. My grandfather and she were on a trip to Czechoslovakia, and my grandfather was reading the newspaper there and he said, "This doesn't look good." They came here from there.

WJN: Everybody who stayed behind was killed during the war?

Gombert: Yes. It wasn't until my mother was in college that she connected with some cousins that she didn't know were still living.

In Roosevelt she had a band. I think it was called the Roosevelt Community Orchestra. It was one of those, "Oh you play? Come join us. Doesn't matter so much what you play. The fact that you play, you should join us."

I can remember being embarrassed. Friends would walk into my house, she'd go "Oh, nice to meet you. What do you play?" (Laughter) The school principal was in the band, a couple of guys who'd been in the Army were in it, and there was a trombone player who played whatever brass instrument you could want. My grandmother's attitude was always, with everybody, "I'm not sure I know anything about you, but I can connect to you through music." I think it was that sense that whoever you are she could connect to you through music that I picked up.

When she and my grandfather were dating, or whatever it was called at that time, they went on a long bicycle trip and she twisted her ankle and ended up needing to go to a hospital for a week and she was on this women's ward with a dozen other women. She said to my grandfather, "Walter, there is no music here. Get my accordion." The way she described it, she entertained them. It was a working class hospital and she didn't have a lot in common with these women, but they could all sing together.

When she retired, she moved to a retirement community that had no choir. How horrible! No choir! (Laughter) My grandmother had never sung in a choir in her life. But they had no choir, so she started a choir. She'd never been a choral director, she had no experience with singing, but she started a choir! She'd tried forming a couple of different bands and that didn't work, so she started a choir. It was very successful. She led it for five years and when she left the retirement community and moved in with my parents, the choir disappeared. She was that kind of person.

Her band at Roosevelt only played for community events. It was the kind of band that only the community would love. It was the kind of band that, "Oh, don't they sound great! My daughter is in there, don't they sound great?" And I think there was something about that that I found wonderful. I remember she got a group of kids in my school together for some occasion. It was always like, "Oh, this occasion is coming up. We should play music for it." I remember we were doing the *Toy Symphony* and she gave the autoharp to one of my third grade classmates. All she had to play was F and D. That's all she had. That's all she could handle. She'd never played an instrument before, and my grandmother winked at me and then said to her, "You have the most important part." Because, truly, in the *Toy Symphony* that repeating F and D phrase was one of the main themes. And yet it was the simplest part that anybody had. And I was very aware that she was giving this child, who had very little musical talent, a really important part, really stroking her, and not trying to teach her something she couldn't do. That had a real impact on me. And I know that the other significant influence that my grandmother had on me was that the community band played a lot of klezmer music. My grandmother always said, "Whatever the situation called for." So sometimes it was more Broadway, sometimes it was more klezmer, sometimes it was patriotic, but I got a lot of klezmer music from her. The other important thing that I learned from her, my uncle had what we latter realized was autism. At the time he was called retarded, or imbecile, or all sorts of other lovely terms that they used to use. My grandmother did a lot of work with children with special needs. She eventually got her masters degree in special ed. And there was no band at the school! (Laughter) So the boy who couldn't use his arms but could use his legs played the bass drum with a pedal and the boy who could play the trombone, but not with his fingers…I did some work with her with some high school age children with special needs. Her attitude, which she articulated, was, "You have to find the key for each of these people. Everybody has sort of a secret. With this kid it might be that everything has to be a game, with this one, if we said we were going to play a Debbie Boone record, she would do anything if she knew that was coming afterwards, and for this one, if you make a song about what we're doing, he'll do it." Her attitude was, there is a key and our job is to try to find what that is. There is no doubt that she had a huge influence on my approach and what I do now.

WJN: So why the switch from computers to music? The big bucks? (Laughter)

Gombert: I was making a lot of money and was not very happy. I was very fortunate, my husband said, "I want you to stop complaining. I want you to choose. Either choose the job that you currently have and stop complaining about it, or choose something else that you really want to be doing." And somehow the way that he phrased it, it was really clear that he was willing to support me in following my passion.

WJN: What kind of work does he do?

Gombert: He's a computer scientist. (Laughter) He studied jazz at Wayne State for a while, studied creative writing at UM for a while, but he's always gone back to programming. Just loves it. Is fired up by that. And it was clear to him that I wasn't. And I think maybe because he did love it so much, he looked at me and said, "You're doing this but you're not fired up about it." And I said, "Give me two weeks to think about it." And I called him back that afternoon and said, "I want to be a musician." I had studied flute performance at the U-M years before, and I had kept up my flute lessons the whole time I was doing computer work. When I was doing flute performance I wasn't sitting in front of a computer screen eight hours a day, I was supposed to be in the practice room eight hours a day, but then I was missing that human connection. To me it's not just about how music makes me feel, it's about sharing that.

I always approach music with that knowledge, of how it touches so many other aspects of our lives. Even my pure recorder lessons at the Ann Arbor School for the Performing Arts, where all I'm doing is teaching children rhythm and so forth, I'm aware of how it touches other aspects of their lives. I have a child who plays recorder. At the first recital he stood up in front of the audience, with this confidence, real presentation confidence, that I didn't know he possessed. I don't think he knew he possessed it, I don't think his mother knew he possessed it. You learn about yourself. It's a different way of knowing yourself. ■

With unconventional ways, Moscow rabbi seeks to boost Jewish life

By Anna Rudnitskaya

MOSCOW (JTA)—The rabbi sits at the head of a conference table in a central Moscow bank and greets its vice president as he walks through the imposing door.

"Come in, Pavel Nikolaevich, I've got many bones to pick with you," the rabbi says.

On the wall hangs a calendar with a Christmas scene titled "Old Testament Scenes," and on the table rest several small desk calendars bearing the bank's logo and a quote from Confucius: "What you don't like done to you, don't do to others."

"First, would you please put on a kipah when talking to decent people?" the rabbis says to Nikolaevich. "Second, what do these 'Old Testament Scenes' on the wall mean? Do you really think Christmas is an Old Testament scene? And thirdly, who do you think is the author of the phrase, 'What you don't like done to you, don't do to others?'"

"Confucius," says the bank executive, taking a kipah from the table and putting it on.

"You are totally wrong," the rabbi says. "This was said by Hillel, a Jewish man of wisdom, and is considered the essence of Judaism."

Nikolaevich sighs. The rabbi takes the calendar from the wall and turns it around so the Christmas scene is covered.

"Man is not allowed to study Torah if there is anything unkosher in the room," he says.

This is the beginning of Rabbi Yosef Hersonski's weekly "Torah in a bank" lesson.

Held weekly for Jewish businesspeople in Moscow, most of whom are Nikolaevich's partners or bank clients, the class is one of the ways Hersonski, the head of the Jewish community in the Russian capital's Khamovniki neighborhood, is trying to draw the mostly assimilated Jews of Moscow to Jewish life.

Hersonski, 32, was raised in Ukraine, immigrated to Israel with his parents at 13 and came to Moscow in 2002 as an envoy for Chabad-Lubavitch. He supervised a number of Internet projects and was involved in informal Jewish education.

Two years ago, one of his students, Moscow businessman Dmitry Agarunov, head of the Gameland media company, suggested that they organize a synagogue in his home neighborhood of Khamovniki, a central Moscow district with a mix of old Moscow intelligentsia and wealthy newcomers. Hersonski became the rabbi.

"After several years of studying Torah, Dmitry thought it was wrong to drive a car to a synagogue to celebrate Shabbat," Hersonski said. "Having the synagogue nearby was one of the first ideas. Another was to build this synagogue so it would correspond to its members' specific interests.

"As for me, I was also looking for some new perspective in my job at that time. So Dmitry's suggestion fell on fertile ground."

The synagogue was opened in rented office space in September 2008, right before the economic crisis hit.

"We decided to do this long before the recession, but it turned out that opening a synagogue was kind of an answer to it," Agarunov told JTA. "It made me feel a bit more relieved. I prayed for the business to survive, and it worked."

One of the synagogue's first events was a conference called Torah and Crisis, which brought together rabbis and businessmen to talk about how to do business in the new economic climate. The conference was such a success that it was followed by a seminar, Torah and Money, which became a regular feature.

One of the first questions Hersonski was asked, he recalls, was whether it would be kosher for a manager to forcefully take an employee who had been caught stealing out to the forest to have a "man-to-man talk." The rabbi reminded him of the Hillel quote that Nikolaevich had mistaken for Confucius.

> *"If you live like a gentile, don't be surprised if your children marry gentiles," the rabbi answers. "What you really need to change is your mind and your lifestyle. So just do it."*

While most Moscow synagogues operate with financial aid from major Russian or international Jewish organizations, the synagogue in Khamovniki is run exclusively by the local community. Participants are expected to chip in for synagogue events—something the rabbi says helps participants feel they are building the community together. The synagogue's slogan is "Among the right guys."

At the moment, about 30 people regularly participate in synagogue events, but another 100 are occasional visitors. The rabbi is trying to attract newcomers in unconventional ways, including using blogs like Live Journal and online social networks like Facebook. He even has started a site in Russian, www.MoyRabbi.ru, where anyone can ask him questions about Judaism.

"I knew that many Jews in Russia are not registered in any Jewish organizations because they are not interested in Jewish life, and I couldn't reach them via traditional resources," Hersonski said. "I wrote a series of provocative posts in my blog trying to make these people show themselves, so that we could at least start a dialogue."

It worked, the rabbi said, but the results were a bit depressing.

"I discovered that most of these people have not only abandoned Jewish values, such as patriotism and religion, but have cultivated strong dislike for them," Hersonski said. "They remained Jews, so I felt it was my task to try and convince them that Jewish nationalism is not synonymous to jingoism, and that religion doesn't mean backwardness but new approaches and upgrade."

Like other Chabad emissaries around the world, called *shluchim*, Hersonski sees it as his responsibility to bring assimilated Jews back to religion.

"They all are Jews, and I have to lead them out of their Egypt and save them from assimilation," he said.

In describing his bid to attract assimilated yuppie Muscovites to his shul, and to Jewish life, Hersonski mixes business-speak with Jewish-speak. "I can only present myself to them in a hope that as the Lubavitcher rebbe put it, even a bit of light will drive away much darkness," he said. "Definitely, eight out of 10 won't come back. But that is natural. We don't sell souvenirs; we sell the changing of a life. The number of consumers for this service is limited."

Konstantin Rabinsky, 30, says he joined the synagogue because he knew Hersonski and was looking for the meaning of life. He says that because members are expected to help keep the synagogue going, the level of commitment in the Khamovniki community is high.

"Members of the community are always willing to help each other in any way they can, including assistance in solving business problems," Rabinsky said. "There are no show-offs, and millionaires and unemployed students are treated on equal terms. And the rabbi is well-educated and open-minded."

Back at the bank, the Judaism seminar gets started. The topic this time, chosen by the participants, is family values in Judaism. They talk about matchmaking, marriage and divorce. The rabbi answers questions with Chasidic fable and old Soviet tales, some of which are racy.

The conversation flows naturally, spilling over to different subjects. There is much laughter.

"What exactly can be done to convince children to marry Jewish?" Nikolaevich asks. "My son lives among his secular Russian friends, and how can I possibly make him follow these principles you tell us about? He is 20, and he has already changed girlfriends a half a dozen times."

"If you live like a gentile, don't be surprised if your children marry gentiles," the rabbi answers. "What you really need to change is your mind and your lifestyle. So just do it." ■

Brasilia's Jews look to younger generation

By Marcus Moraes

BRASILIA, Brazil (JTA)—Looking from above, the design of Brazil's capital city resembles an airplane.

It's a fitting metaphor for the city's Jews, who probably spend more time at the airport in Brasilia than any institution in the city.

The airport also is part of the routine of a couple of Jewish 20-somethings from Rio de Janeiro who fly to Brasilia once a month to organize Jewish activities for some 25 children aged 5 to 13.

They are madrichim, or counselors, for the youth movement Hashomer Hatzair, which recently opened a branch in Brasilia.

"The fact that there is no Jewish school in the city makes parents more willing to taking their kids to a Jewish movement," said Gil Chor, 23, one of the Rio-based coordinators for the group.

Known as Shomer, the organization "uses nonformal education through group activities to teach our ideology, humanist Judaism, love for the nature, respect and so on," he said.

The Jewish population of Brasilia is comprised mostly of families who have moved for professional reasons and still commute to their hometowns in places such as Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo. Though they are only part-timers in Brasilia, they play a key role in sustaining Jewish life in the capital of Latin America's largest country.

"We have an established Jewish population of some 300 people, plus a floating population that come and go working for the government," said Vivienne Landwehr, 56, president of the Brasilia Israelite Cultural Association, the city's only Jewish institution.

Shomer's activities take place at the Israelite Cultural Association. Known by its Portuguese acronym, ACIB, the association serves as the cultural, social and religious center for Brasilia's Jews. The 45-year-old institution hosts prayer services, classes, lectures and luncheons. Volunteers run its operations.

The community's limited budget, dearth of affiliated Jews, high rate of assimilation, and the growing number of so-called messianic Jews and Christian proselytizers present Brasilia's Jews with some serious challenges. "Despite their small number and their distance to the main Jewish communities, the Jews of Brasilia struggle to maintain a center for Judaism here in the capital," Israel's ambassador to Brazil, Giora Becher, told JTA.

Though Hashomer Hatzair is the world's oldest Zionist youth movement, with some 7,000 members in the Diaspora scattered about some 20 countries, Shomer reached Brasilia less than two years ago.

After learning of the positive experience that Florianopolis, a southern city in Brazil, had with the movement, community members from Brasilia decided to import the movement here. Shomer now has 220 members in four Brazilian cities, according to Chor.

Parents say it has been a big success.

Translator Erica Saubermann Alem moved from Rio to Brasilia four years ago when her husband took a government job. Their 5-year-old son, Theo, recently joined Shomer.

"The greatest value of Shomer is that it allows Theo to feel Jewish by keeping contact with our customs and having other Jewish friends—in short, things he wouldn't learn at home because I'm not religious enough to teach," Alem said.

"The existence of Shomer is a major source of Jewish culture to my children," said Sao Paulo state prosecutor Andre Brawerman, whose kids, aged 7 and 4, attend Shomer activities. "Unity and friendship within the Jewish community is key in an inhospitable city like Brasilia, where people are as dry as the weather."

Travel expenses for the madrichim who visit Brasilia from Rio are shared among the students' parents. To keep costs down, the Shomer activists usually sleep at the home of Leslie Sasson Cohen, ACIB's former cultural director.

Mikhael Assuncao, 22, is a proud local madrich, or counselor. A Brasilia native, he was trained by more experienced counselors from Rio and Sao Paulo.

"In 2010 there will be the very first activity exclusively held by madrichim from Brasilia," Assuncao boasted. "A local camp is scheduled for this year, and we intend to take our kids to the national camp as well." Since the movement is so small in Brasilia, the children are not as segmented by age as they would be elsewhere. Participants range from 4 to 13. Assuncao hopes some of the participants will make up the first generation of Brasilia's homegrown Shomer madrichim.

Cohen shares Assuncao's hopes but says many challenges remain. "The biggest challenge to work at ACIB is that we lack a little bit of professionalism," she said. "We need more organization, planning and updating our goals. We need to recycle." ■

March 2010

Monday 1

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State Street. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

Senior Photography Show: JCC Seniors. Photographic works of local seniors on display daily, 9 a.m.–6 p.m. *Through March 31.*

Women's Torah Study: TBE. With Cantor Annie Rose. The group will discuss Ki Tissa. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 2

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m., $4/session or $10/3 sessions; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games. Wii sports including bowling, tennis and baseball. No sports or computer experience required. 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Portraits in Leadership: Jewish Learning Institute. "Timeless Tales for Inspired Living." Winter semester course studies the inspiring life story of six figures whose courage and determination helped Judaism weather its darkest hours. 9:30–11 a.m. at Chabad House and 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group): All ages and levels welcome including U-M and non-U-M participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of U-M Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Spirituality Book Club: TBE. With Cantor Annie Rose. The book selection is *Kabbalah: A Love Story* by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner.

Social Action Program: TBE. Discussion of the topic of Human Trafficking. 7:30 p.m.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Class led by Rabbi Glogower covering various topics treated over a period of one to several weeks. Material is presented in English and Hebrew. 8 p.m. at U-M Hillel.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Wednesday 3

Thursday 4

Prayer, Weekly Torah Reading and Jewish Philosophy–for Women: Chabad. 9 a.m. at the JCC.

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., $4 or 3/$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Weekly special events and guest presentations (see description below); Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky at 2:15 p.m. Call Merrill Poliner at 971-0990 for name of current book.

Presentation and Birthday Celebration: JCC Seniors. Birthday celebration for all with March birthdays featuring lunch and birthday cake for family and friends at 12:30 p.m. Followed at 1 p.m. by a presentation on Jewish folk tales by Professor Chava Weissler, Fellow at the U-M Frankel Institute of Judaic Studies.

Talmud Study Group–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 5

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

Tot Shabbat and Dinner: TBE. Dinner, songs and popsicle oneg. 5:30–7 p.m.

Friday evening services: *See listing end of calendar.*

Saturday 6

Torah Study: TBE. Led by Rabbi Levy at 8:50 a.m., followed by Morning Minyan at 9:30 a.m.

Mystical Insights to the Torah–for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. 1 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Laws of Shabbat–Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Shabbat services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Sunday 7

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book–for Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Series Meeting: BIC. Yad Project. 9:30 a.m.

Blood Drive: BIC. Red Cross Blood Drive. 9:30 a.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Passover Cooking Workshop: TBE Sisterhood. Led by Marianne Aaron. $5/person. RSVP to Helaine Reid at hmr1335@comcast.net.

Jewish Concepts–for Women: Chabad. Learn the deeper meanings of the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. *Every Sunday*.

Monday 8

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State Street. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing.*

Board Meeting: TBE Brotherhood. 6:30 p.m.

Board Meeting: TBE Sisterhood. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 9

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m., $4/session or $10/3 sessions; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games. Wii sports including bowling, tennis and baseball. No sports or computer experience required. 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

School's Out/JCC's In: JCC Youth. On days when Hebrew Day School or Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed but the JCC is open, the JCC Youth Department offers full day School's Out programs featuring field trips or special activities. These programs are for JCC members ONLY in grades K-5. Middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers for reduced fee. 8 a.m.–4 p.m. $36 with $4 off for additional siblings; $10/day for extended care from 4–6 p.m. (No extra charge for Kids' Konnection or Kids' Klub students enrolled that day. For information, call Deborah Huerta at 971-0990 or email deborahhuerta@jccfed.org.

Portraits in Leadership: Jewish Learning Institute. "Timeless Tales for Inspired Living." Winter semester course studies the inspiring life story of six figures whose courage and determination helped Judaism weather its darkest hours. 9:30–11 a.m. at Chabad House and 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Movie Tuesday: TBE. With Rabbi Delson. Noon.

Wii Fun: JCC Seniors. Intro to Wii sports. No experience or physical expertise necessary. 1 p.m. For information, call Merrill at 971-0990.

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group): All ages and levels welcome including U-M and non-U-M participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of U-M Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

An Evening with Leonard Slatkin: JCC of West Bloomfield. Co-sponsored by Jewish Historical Society of Michigan. Part of the JCC Stephen Gottlieb Music Festival. 7:30 p.m. at JCC of West Bloomfield, 6600 West Maple. $12/members; n$15/non-members. For information, call 248-432-5470.

Men's Torah Study: TBE. Led by Roger Stutesman. This lay-led group will discuss Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei. Refreshments served. 7:30 p.m.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Class led by Rabbi Glogower covering various topics treated over a period of one to several weeks. Material is presented in English and Hebrew. 8 p.m. at U-M Hillel.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Wednesday 10

Board Meeting: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Judaism 101: BIC. Conservative Judaism. 8 p.m.

Thursday 11

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., $4 or 3/$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Weekly special events and guest presentations (see description below); Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky at 2:15 p.m. Call Merrill Poliner at 971-0990 for name of current book.

Prayer, Weekly Torah Reading and Jewish Philosophy–for Women: Chabad. 9 a.m. at the JCC.

Jewish Mama's Group: JCC. This group focuses on the book *Blessings of a Skinned Knee* by Wendy Mogul, which discusses how to raise self-reliant, compassionate and ethical children. 10:30 a.m.–noon. Four sessions for $60. Cost includes book, snacks and childcare. For information, contact Noreen Deyoung at 971-0990. *Also April 14 and May 12.*

Health Check and Discussion: JCC Seniors. At 12:30 p.m. a registered nurse from Care Response will take and record blood pressures and address questions. (This event is repeated the second Thursday of each month.) Followed at 1 p.m. by a presentation by Ira Lax, Outreach Assistant at the Ann Arbor Public Library, on "Library Programs and Services with Seniors in Mind."

Study Group–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 12

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

Tot Shabbat, Dinner and Services: TBE. Tot Shabbat and dinner followed by songs and popsicle oneg. 5:30 p.m.

Shabbat Service, Oneg and Music: TBE. Service followed by 2nd Grade Oneg Shabbat and lively music with Middle School Shir Chadash. 7:30 p.m.

Friday evening services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Saturday 13

Torah Study: TBE. Led by Rabbi Levy at 8:50 a.m. followed by Morning Minyan at 9:30 a.m. and Sanctuary Service at 10 a.m.

Kehillat Shabbat: BIC. From Purim to Passover for 1st through 5th graders. 11 a.m.

Tot Shabbat: BIC. Tot Shabbat. For preschoolers and their families. 11:15 a.m.

Mystical Insights to the Torah–for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. 1 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Cooking Competition: TBE TNT. Twenties and Thirties Group sponsored "Iron Chef" cooking competition with teams led by Rabbi Levy and Rabbi Delson. For information or to RSVP, call 665-4744 or email ldelson@templebethemeth.org.

Kids' Night Out: JCC Youth. Featuring the movie *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs,* dinner and lots of games, beginning with board games and card games, including Monopoly, Rummikub, Sorry, Uno and more. 6:30–10 p.m. $20/members ($2 discount for additional siblings); $25/non-members. For information, call Deborah Huerta at 971-0990.

From Beth Israel to Broadway: BIC. Honoring Carol Finerman. Reservations required. 8 p.m.

Laws of Shabbat–Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Shabbat services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Sunday 14

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book–for Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, plus an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Camp Raanana Event: JCC Youth. Learn more about Camp Raanana and sign up before March 15 for Early Bird discount. Free pizza lunch, plus activities for new and returning campers. Bring a friend who registers for first time and receive $10 off a session. 12:30–2:30 p.m. For information, contact Deborah Huerta at 971-0990 or email deborahhuerta@jccfed.org.

Bowling: TBE Rishonim Youth Group. 1 p.m. at Colonial Lanes.

Presentation: TBE Sisterhood. Learn about the Kindertransport program, which took place from 1938-39, nine months prior to World War II, and when nearly 10,000 children were taken in from Nazi Germany and occupied territories by the United Kingdom. 6 p.m.

Basic Judaism: TBE. Led by Rabbi Lisa Delson. 7:45 p.m.

Jewish Concepts–for Women: Chabad. Learn the deeper meanings of the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. *Every Sunday*.

Monday 15

Women"s Torah Study: TBE. With Cantor Annie Rose. The group will study Vayikra, the first Torah portion of the Book of Leviticus. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 16

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m., $4/session or $10/3 sessions; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including Mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games. Wii sports including bowling, tennis and baseball. No sports or computer experience required. 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Portraits in Leadership: Jewish Learning Institute. "Timeless Tales for Inspired Living." Winter semester course studies the inspiring life story of six figures whose courage and determination helped Judaism weather its darkest hours. 9:30–11 a.m. at Chabad House and 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group): All ages and levels welcome including U-M and non-U-M participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of U-M Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Film and Book Club: TBE Sisterhood. Discussion of Kindertransport, a one-act play by Diane Samuels. Copies of the play will be available at the meeting or in advance from Annette Fisch, annette1636@yahoo.com. 7:30 p.m.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Class led by Rabbi Glogower covering various topics treated over a period of one to several weeks. Material is presented in English and Hebrew. 8 p.m. at U-M Hillel.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Wednesday 17

Judaism 101: BIC. Conservative Judaism. 8 p.m.

Thursday 18

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., $4 or 3/$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky at 2:15 p.m. Call Merrill Poliner at 971-0990 for name of current book.

Prayer, Weekly Torah Reading and Jewish Philosophy–for Women: Chabad. 9 a.m. at the JCC.

Discussion: JCC Seniors. At 12:30 p.m., Allison Pollock, MSW, Jewish Family Services Geriatric Social Worker will be available for discussion, questions and assistance. At 1 p.m., Rabbi Levy of Temple Beth Emeth will present, "Between Purim and Pesach."

Caregiver Conversations: JFS. Monthly facilitated discussion for adult children in a variety of caregiving roles for aging parents. This month's topic is "Long Distance Caregiving," discussing best ways to coordinate care, access resources, and be a support for long-distance aging loved ones. Caregiver Conversations is sponsored by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, and co-sponsored by the JCC, AARH, TBE, BIC, and JCS. For information or to register, contact Abbie at 769-0209 or email abbie@jfsannarbor.org. 6:30–8 p.m. at the JCC.

Talmud Study Group–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 19

School's Out/JCC's In: JCC Youth. On days when Hebrew Day School or Ann Arbor Public Schools are closed but the JCC is open, the JCC Youth Department offers full day School's Out programs featuring field trips or special activities. These programs are for JCC members ONLY in grades K-5. Middle school students are also welcome to participate as helpers for reduced fee. 8 a.m.–4 p.m. $36 with $4 off for additional siblings. $10/day for extended care from 4–6 p.m. (No extra charge for Kids' Konnection or Kids' Klub students enrolled that day.) For information, call Deborah Huerta at 971-0990 or email deborahhuerta@jccfed.org.

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

Tot Shabbat and Dinner: TBE. Followed by songs and popsicle oneg. 5:30 p.m.

Adult Shabbat Dinner: TBE. 6 p.m.

Community Shabbat Dinner: BIC. 7 p.m.

Shabbat Service: With Kol Halev. 7:30 p.m.

"The Dysfunctional Family as Moral Exemplar:" BIC. Presented by Dr. Burton Visotzky, Scholar-in-Residence at Beth Israel. 8 p.m.

Friday evening services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Saturday 20

Torah Study: TBE. Led by Rabbi Levy at 8:50 a.m., followed by Morning Minyan at 9:30 a.m. and Sanctuary Service at 10 a.m.

Mystical Insights to the Torah–for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah. 1 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Luncheon and Talk: BIC. Dr. Burton Visotzky, Scholar-in-Residence at Beth Israel, presents, "Isaac Unbound." 12:30 p.m.

Shabbat Mincha Service: BIC. 6:30 p.m.

"Cairo to Qatar and Beyond:" BIC. Dr. Burton Visotzky, Scholar-in-Residence at Beth Israel, will present "Jewish-Muslim Dialogue in the Past Five Years: One Rabbi's Experiences." 7:30 p.m.

Laws of Shabbat–Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Shabbat services: *See listing at thend of calendar.*

Sunday 21

"Moses Goes Hollywood: Approaches to the Passover Story:" BIC. Presented by Dr. Burton Visotzky, Scholar-in-Residence at Beth Israel. 9:30 a.m.

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book–for Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. *Every Sunday.*

Passover Sale: TBE Sisterhood. Includes Haggadot and other ritual items for seders. 3–7 p.m.

Basic Judaism: TBE. With Rabbi Lisa Delson. 7:45 p.m.

Jewish Concepts–for Women: Chabad. Learning the deeper meanings to the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. *Every Sunday*.

Monday 22

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State Street. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing*.

Tuesday 23

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m.; $4/session or $10/3 sessions; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games. Wii sports including bowling, tennis and baseball. No sports or computer experience required. 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group): All ages and levels welcome including U-M and non-U-M participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of U-M Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Men's Torah Study: TBE. Led by Roger Stutesman. This lay-led group will discuss Parashat Vayakhel-Pekudei. Refreshments served. 7:30 p.m.

Portraits in Leadership: Jewish Learning Institute. "Timeless Tales for Inspired Living." Winter semester course studies the inspiring life story of six figures whose courage and determination helped Judaism weather its darkest hours. 9:30–11 a.m. at Chabad House and 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Wii Fun: JCC Seniors. Intro to Wii sports. No experience or physical expertise necessary. 1 p.m. For information, call Merrill at 971-0990.

Topics in Jewish Law: AAOM. Class led by Rabbi Glogower covering various topics treated over a period of one to several weeks. Material is presented in English and Hebrew. 8 p.m. at U-M Hillel.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Wednesday 24

Model Seder: BIC. 4th and 5th Grade Hebrew School Program. 4:15 p.m.

Judaism 101: BIC. Conservative Judaism. 8 p.m.

Thursday 25

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 10 a.m., $4 or 3/$10; Current Events with Heather Dombey, a Jewish perspective on this week's news, 11 a.m.; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Special events and guest presentations, 1 p.m.; Literary Group with Sidney Warschausky at 2:15 p.m. Call Merrill Poliner at 971-0990 for name of current book.

Prayer, Weekly Torah Reading and Jewish Philosophy–for Women: Chabad. 9 a.m. at the JCC.

Intergenerational Passover: JCC Seniors and JCC ECC. Children and seniors join together for this program featuring an all-Gershwin program performed by local musician Will Bennett, with a piano solo as well as a sing-a-long. Children will participate in interactive telling of the Passover story, including songs and dances. Passover-style lunch will be served. 11 a.m. For information, contact Noreen Deyoung at 971-0990 or email noreendeyoung@jccfed.org.

Men's Seder: TBE Brotherhood. Follows the Men of Reform Judaism (MJR) Haggadah. Open to all. There is a charge for the event and reservations are required. For information, visit www.templebethemeth.org/tbe/brotherhood.

Talmud Study Group–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. Sharpen your wits and knowledge of the Jewish legal system by following the intriguing discussions in the Talmud. The Talmud is a composite of practical law, logical argumentation and moral teachings. Study of the original Talmud tractate Taanit chapter 2. 8 p.m. *Every Thursday.*

Friday 26

Meditation: TBE. 1 p.m.

Weekly Yiddish Reading Group: JCC Seniors. Meets at the JCC. 1:30 p.m. Call Ray Juni at 761-2765 for information.

Tot Shabbat and Dinner: TBE. Followed by songs and popsicles. 5:30–7 p.m.

Friday evening services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Saturday 27

Torah Study: TBE. Led by Rabbi Levy at 8:50 a.m., followed by Morning Minyan at 9:30 a.m

Tot Shabbat: BIC. For preschoolers and their families. 11:15 a.m.

Mystical Insights to the Torah–for Women: Chabad. Learn more about the mystical dimensions of the Torah: Chabad. 1 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Laws of Shabbat–Jewish Ethics: Chabad. Study group code of law for Shabbat, and study of Jewish Ethics, 1/2 hour before sundown. *Every Saturday.*

Shabbat services: *See listing at end of calendar.*

Sunday 28

Reading Hebrew through the Prayer Book–for Women: Chabad. An in-depth study into the prayer book, an overview of the weekly Torah reading, with Jewish philosophy. 9:30 a.m. at Chabad House. *Every Sunday.*

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidism and open your eyes to the beauty of Judaism. 10:30 a.m. at Chabad House. *Every Sunday.*

Gemini Celebration of Spring Concert: The Ark. Hungarian born twin brothers Sandor and Laszlo Slomovits perform their acoustic music as the duo Gemini for children and families. Rousing singalongs, hand motion tunes, folk tales, and music from around the world. Joined by master musicians and friends Aron Kaufman on percussion and Brian Brill on piano, plus very special guest, San's daughter Emily rose on fiddle. $10/tickets. 1 p.m. at The Ark, 316 South Main Street.

Basic Judaism: TBE. With Rabbi Lisa Delson. 7:45 p.m.

Jewish Concepts–for Women: Chabad. Learning the deeper meanings to the Jewish way of life. 8 p.m. *Every Sunday*.

Monday 29

English as a Second Language Daily Classes: JFS. Ongoing class from 9 a.m.–noon on Mondays–Fridays and 1–3 p.m. on Mondays–Thursdays at Jewish Family Services, 2245 South State Street. For more information, contact JFS at 769-0209 or email andre@jfsannarbor.org. *Ongoing*.

Taanit Bechorot–Fast of the Firstborn: BIC. Shaharit Service and Siyyum followed by hametz breakfast at GSAC. 7 a.m.

Tuesday 30

SPICE of LIFE: JCC Seniors. Energy Exercise with Maria Farquhar, 11 a.m., $4/session or $10/3 sessions; $3 Homemade Dairy Buffet Lunch, noon; Games and activities including mahjong, quilting, art projects and card games. Wii sports including bowling, tennis and baseball. No sports or computer experience required. 1 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Calendar

Portraits in Leadership: Jewish Learning Institute. "Timeless Tales for Inspired Living." Winter semester course studies the inspiring life story of six figures whose courage and determination helped Judaism weather its darkest hours. 9:30–11 a.m. at Chabad House and 7:30–9 p.m. at the JCC.

Passover Shaharit Services: BIC. 9:30 p.m.

Yidish Tish (Yiddish Conversational Group): All ages and levels welcome including U-M and non-U-M participants. 1:30 p.m. at Beanster's Café, ground floor of U-M Michigan League. For information, call 936-2367.

Second Night Seder: TBE. Reservations open to the community as space permits after March 15. $18.adult; $15/child. For information or reservations, call 665-4744.

Passover Seder: Chabad. Traditional Seder, in English and Hebrew, with festive homemade meal and inspiring insights into the Haggadah. $36/community member; $18/U-M students. For information, visit www.jewmich.com. 7:45 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion—for Women: Chabad. Reading the Bible may be easy, but understanding it is no simple matter. Study the text in the original, together with the classical commentaries. 8:30 p.m. *Every Tuesday*.

Wednesday 31

Passover Shaharit Services: BIC. 9:30 p.m.

Passover Services: Chabad. 9:45 a.m.

Busy Women's Lunch: TBE. 11:45 a.m.

Passover Mincha Service: BIC. 7:30 p.m.

Passover Seder: Chabad. $36/community member; $18/U-M students. For information, visit www.jewmich.com. 7:45 p.m.

April 2010

Wednesday 4

Detroit Zoo Day: U-M Association of Jewish Alumni. Tented space near wolverine exhibit offering coloring and craft projects for kids, kosher-for-Passover snacks, family pictures, music, giveaways and more. No cost beyond regular zoo admission. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. For more information, visit www.umaja.org.

Weekly Friday night Shabbat services

Shabbat Service: AAOM. Services held at U-M Hillel. 4:45 p.m. Call 994-9258 in advance to confirm time.

Shabbat Service: BIC. 6 p.m.

Shabbat Service: TBE. Tot Shabbat at 5:30 p.m. followed by Shira at 6 p.m.; Shira: Traditional Service at 7:30 p.m. For information, call 665-4744.

Shabbat Service: Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. 6:15 PM at the JCC the last Friday each month. Musical Shabbat service followed by vegetarian potluck. Tot Shabbat with optional kid's pizza dinner at 6:00 PM. All are welcome to attend. For information, call 913-9705, email info@aarecon.org or visit www.aarecon.org.

Shabbat Service: Chabad. Begins at candlelighting time. Home hospitality available for Shabbat meals and Jewish holidays. Call 995-3276 in advance.

Weekly Shabbat services

Shabbat Services: AAOM. Morning service, 9:30 a.m. Evening service, 35 minutes before sunset. Call 662-5805 for information. Mincha/Ma'ariv with Seudah Shlisheet and Dvar Torah every week. Torah topics and a bite to eat. Discussions led by Rabbi Rod Glogower and other local scholars. Home hospitality available for Shabbat meals. U-M Hillel.

Shabbat Services: BIC. 9:30 a.m. Morning childcare from 10 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Shabbat Services: AA Reconstructionist Havurah. Discussion-based format with topics changing monthly. For info, email info@aarecon.org or call 913-9705 or visit www.aarecon.org.

Shabbat Services: Chabad. Morning services at 9:45 a.m. Afternoon services 45 minutes before sundown.

Shabbat Services: Pardes Hannah. Generally meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. Call 663-4039 for more information. 10 a.m. Led by Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg.

Shabbat Services: TBE. Torah Study at 8:50 a.m. Chapel Service at 9:30 a.m. Sanctuary Service at 10 a.m. Call the office at 665-4744 or consult website at www.templebethemeth.org for service details.

Home Hospitality for Shabbat and Holiday Meals: AAOM. Call 662-5805 in advance.

Home Hospitality and Meals: Chabad. Every Shabbat and *yom tov* (Jewish holiday). Call 995-3276 in advance.

Phone numbers and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM)
1429 Hill Street, 994-5822

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah (AARH)
P.O. Box 7451, Ann Arbor, 913-9705

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC)
2000 Washtenaw Ave., 665-9897

Chabad House
715 Hill Street, 995-3276

EMU Hillel
965 Washtenaw Ave., Ypsilanti 482-0456

Jewish Community Center (JCC)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 971-0990

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS)
2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 975-9872

Jewish Family Services (JFS)
2245 South State Street, 769-0209

Jewish Federation
2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 677-0100

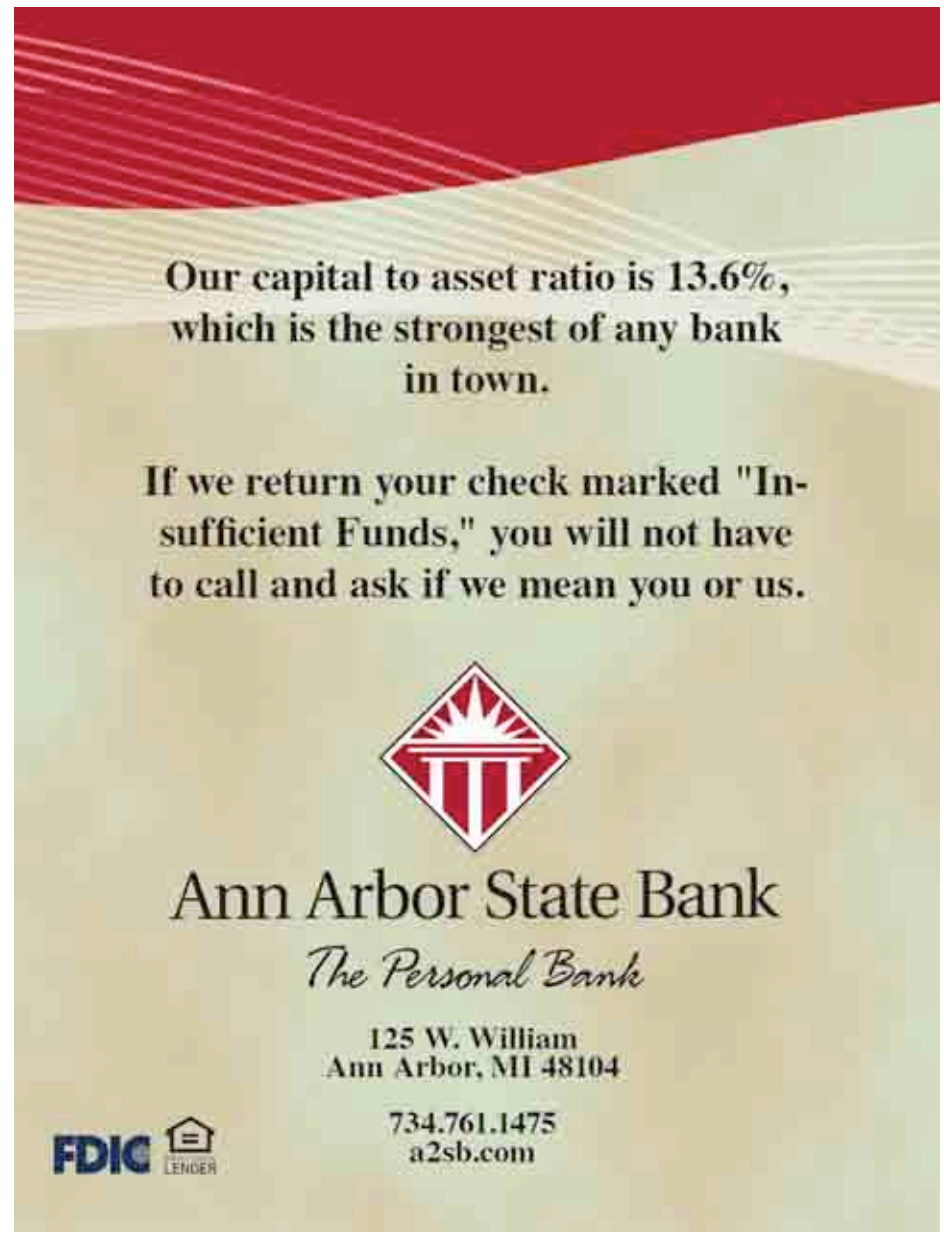
Pardes Hannah
2010 Washtenaw Ave., 761-5324

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE)
2309 Packard Road, 665-4744

U-M Hillel
1429 Hill Street, 769-0500

Shabbat Candlelighting

March 5	5:32 p.m.
March 12	5:41 p.m.
March 19	5:50 p.m.
March 26	5:58 p.m.



Witness Newspeak, from page 1

extending well beyond Jewish circles, jolting the previously unheeding out their comfort zone. Far and wide, the increasingly obnoxious deportment of the cultists had already exhausted the patience of those impacted by their antics (see Steve Pastner's report). Many who were previously indulgent are finally catching on that sheep do not prosper when they invite wolves in sheep's clothing into the fold.

Cults tend to evolve and radicalize. They speak their own language, often unintelligible or misleading to an outsider. It is important, therefore, to understand the context. Let us start with Yasser Arafat, Heskovitz's original hero. Arafat's initial public advocacy was for a one-state solution, a secular state of both Arabs and Jews (with the Arabs dominant, of course). In practice, though, it soon became evident that Arafat would not tolerate any Jews living in any place he controlled. At Oslo, he claimed to concede the concept of a two-state solution, with vital stipulations that did not get sufficient attention: The Palestinian State was to be *Judenrein* [free of Jews]. For Israel, he had his own Law of Return, namely that any Arab anywhere who claimed to have ancestors that had lived in what is now Israel was entitled to move there, whereas Jewish immigration would cease. In short, he was willing to countenance the existence of Israel, but only under conditions insuring that it would gradually be turned into an Arab state. Elements of the PLO, particularly the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, broke with Arafat over his perceived new flexibility, as did Herskovitz. They insisted on a single state, with ethnic cleansing of the Jews from its entirety. This is also the stance of Hamas, an offshoot of the Moslem Brotherhood (who want to get rid of the Christians as well). Once ethnic cleansing is openly advocated, there is an imperative to justify it by denigrating the target. Hence, anti-Semitism became progressively more conspicuous in the propaganda of Palestinian extremism.

Muslim anti-Semitism has existed all along, with fluctuating intensity and intervals of respite. It differed a lot from the Christian variety in its mythology. The two began to converge with Hitler's tactical outreach to the Arabs. The Arab Socialist Party (Baath) was founded in emulation of the National Socialist Party of Germany. As the exposure of the Arab ruling class to the West increased, previously unfamiliar themes migrated, such as the blood of children in matzos and the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

Recently, innovations have emerged, aimed at denying a historical past for Jews in Palestine. Some Arab propagandists announced that there was never a Jewish temple in Jerusalem, but this doctrine did not find much of a constituency; it conflicted with the Bible (rendering it mostly unfit for Western consumption) and also with Muslim religious scriptures. An upgrade was recently posted on ArborUpdate.com by one of the "Witnesses": "The 'storyline of the Bible,' if you take the time to actually read and understand it, makes it clear that Jews are not a people of the Bible. There was a biblical people known as the Judaeans but their name is mistranslated in English Bibles as 'Jews' and they never practiced Judaism, which came into being after Christianity." On the same blog, Herskovitz confirmed, "Neither Brysk nor myself can claim origins in the Semitic world." You can now understand Aimee Smith', a hajib wearing Christian, as quoted by Aisner: "Stop pretending you're from Arabia. Be proud of your European roots." (The implied subsuming of Palestine under Arabia is intriguing. Is it endorsement of the pan-Arab imperialism of Saddam Hussein or is it allusion to Osama bin Laden's caliphate? But I digress.) Does all this sound to you like a message intended as outreach for dialog to a Jewish congregation (Herskovitz's pretense to Aisner), or something else?

The cultists bill their efforts as activism for the Palestinian cause (which they have redefined into solidarity with Hamas in Gaza, while they savagely attack Arab moderates). According to recent web postings, Mozhgan Savabiesfahini (who glories in the "Iranian Revolution") appears to hate the U.S. as much as Israel. Reflection on their more recent activities and on Laurel Federbush's memoir, however, indicates their present primary obsession to be with gleeful Jew-baiting. Gay-bashing homosexuals have become a cliche. Why is there so much reluctance to admit the existence of anti-Semites of Jewish ancestry? After all, the gay homophobes remain active homosexuals, whereas the Jew-haters do not function as Jews. William Pierce (whose father was born Jewish) founded and ran National Alliance (described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as the most dangerous American neo-Nazi group) and wrote *The Turner Diaries* (which Timothy McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, cited as his inspiration). A generation earlier, George Lincoln Rockwell (whose mother was Jewish) founded the American Nazi Party. The Gestapo had its "honorary Aryans"; Herskovitz appears to aspire to be an "honorary Arab." (In both cases, the term in quotes has a distorted meaning: to Himmler, every good Aryan had to be a Nazi; to Herskovitz, every good Arab has to be a jihadi.) Henry Herskovitz, Sol Metz, Marcia Federbush, and Blaine Coleman opportunistically invoke Jewish ancestry to pretend that it absolves them of the taint of anti-Semitism. Many of their shriller collaborators, Mozhgan Savabiesfahini (Mrs. Coleman), Michelle Kinnucan, Aimee Smith, and Charles Loucks, do not have that baggage.

The cultists like to raid online blogs, spamming them with monomaniacal propaganda in complete disregard of the topic under discussion (using multiple screen names from multiple public computers at libraries and other sites), but they have exhausted the tolerance of most venues. In particular, AnnArbor.com now polices its "Comments" feature diligently, promptly removing off-topic or abusive posts. Whenever they can get away with it, the cultists plant links to their flagship website, Michelle Kunnican's "zionistsout.blogspot.com." It is instructive to observe the gospel preached to the choir, as against the deliberate ambiguities of Herskovitz or Coleman in public relations mode. The website is long and verbose, replete with denunciations and with what I can best

continued on next page

describe (ironically) as Talmudical disputation, so a few excerpts will have to suffice. The latest crusade (oops, jihad) is against "Ann Arbor's Zionized City Council" because it is "an outrage for a man with Neal Elyakin's record of denigrating the history and human rights of Palestinians and of supporting the racist institutions of apartheid Israel to be appointed to the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission." (In other words, let us apply the Nuremberg Laws and ban Jews from public office.) "Ann Arbor's Zionized local 'peace' organizations–Veterans for Peace, Michigan Peaceworks, Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, Jewish Voices for Peace and Justice" fail to satisfy, and the leader of ICPJ is hectored at length. The sharpest vituperation is reserved for an Arab moderate. Apparently, Kunnican is most upset at those she believes are supposed to be allies but who do not fall into line, and she thinks that abuse is the way to make them see the true path. Here is the rationale for harassing Beth Israel: "If Rabbi Rob Dobrusin is to be believed, it is precisely because of the 'actual opinions among real people in the congregation' that BIC is a fitting site for a protest. As Dobrusin wrote in the *Ann Arbor News* in 2007: "There is one general statement which I can make on behalf of the congregation–Beth Israel Congregation affirms without any hesitation or equivocation the legitimacy of the existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish State–. No matter how long the protests continue, this will never change." An unrelated item gives the flavor of the mind-set: "When, in Senate confirmation hearings, former Republican Attorney General Michael Mukasey, 'a believer and devout Jew,' refused to declare waterboarding illegal under U.S. law, his nomination was rescued by two Jewish Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee, Diane Feinstein and Charles Schumer, who voted with Republicans to send the nomination to the full Senate. They were joined there by Joseph Lieberman, another Jew who voted against his caucus."(In the next edition [of Kunnican's blog], expect to learn that Dick Cheney is a Marrano).

Author George Orwell recognized that the rewriting of history and the distortion of words (often to the opposite of their true meaning) are serious weapons of a totalitarian agenda, not merely quirky rhetorical excesses. The propaganda we have been discussing fits that mold perfectly; it is not just absurd, it is malevolent. WAR IS PEACE in 1984; peace comes from Hamas rockets on kindergartens and suicide bombings of weddings. When Hitler announced in *Mein Kampf* that he would rid Germany of Jews, he had fewer means to do so than Hamas has to rid Israel of Jews. Henry Herskovitz has referred to a zero-sum game in which Arabs are moved into Israel and Jews are moved out, but objects to this being characterized as ethnic cleansing.

A prime example of Orwellian Newspeak is "Palestinian Holocaust." The Holocaust was the systematic mass murder of six million European Jews by the Germans and their allies, in implementation of a policy decision by the Nazis to kill all Jewish men, women and children. The Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the leader of the Palestinian Arabs in the 1930s, spent World War II in Berlin, where he lobbied the Nazis to make contingency plans for gas chambers in Palestine. Obviously, nothing remotely resembling the Holocaust has happened to the Palestinian Arabs. Indeed, there are a lot more Arabs around today in what was the British mandate than there were in 1947. A couple of million Arabs are citizens of Israel; no Jews are allowed to live under Palestine Authority administration or under Hamas rule. As a European Jew who survived the Holocaust and many of whose relatives did not, I consider such rhetoric a desecration, particularly offensive when it is mouthed by American Jews whose families only escaped the Holocaust by an accident of geography. The sincerity of those who bandy around "Palestinian Holocaust"can be gauged by their stubborn refusal to condemn the true, ongoing genocide in Sudan. Like Holocaust denial, Holocaust trivialization is used to anesthetize the unwary by those who wish to repeat the real thing. Toronto staged a film festival last summer to honor the 100th anniversary of Tel Aviv; the usual suspects from Hollywood issued a manifesto calling for a boycott of the event because, they say, Tel Aviv is an illegal settlement built on stolen Arab land. (Next time you hear "illegal settlement,"ask for a definition and think about the implications.) "The Few and the Just"[as Federbush refers to the cultists] are toiling in the "1984" Ministry of Truth, diligently editing history and revising the dictionary of Newspeak. ■

False Witness, from page 2

it into an NPR story. It turned up other places, as well, until the media watchdog group Committee for Accuracy in Mideast Reporting in America (CAMERA) drew attention to actual global military rankings. Apparently, back in 1982 Herskovitz' mysterious visitor from the future had missed all the published corrections—NPR broadcast their's on February 5, 2004.

That has not been the only role CAMERA has played shedding light on some of the group's false witness. In 2007 Herskovitz and another synagogue picketer described in the Aisner piece, Aimee Smith, were invited to present their anti-Israel perspective at a panel discussion in Hillsdale, Michigan. Herskovitz reported confounding his undergraduate debate opponent by confronting the Jewish student with "damaging quotes" by Zionist leaders. The puzzled student dismissed the unfamiliar statements as atypically "extremist." But the racist ravings were, Herskovitz insisted, by the very "founders of the Jewish State."

In reporting his success Herskovitz helpfully provided a link to his collection of "damaging quotes," arranged in PowerPoint slides and still posted on his U-M personal page. No wonder the student was nonplussed. The presentation is full of fakes. It includes outright fabrications attributed to fictional characters as well as maliciously altered versions of genuine statements by real people. Some quotes are fraudulent by virtue of being wildly out of context, some by falsely conveying an extremist view as if it were mainstream or unchallenged. Herskovitz could have cut and pasted these from Stormfront or Jew Watch or any of the other neo-Nazi outlets where they are gleefully featured, or he could have lifted them wholesale from Radioislam.org (which boasts it's "the mother of all anti-Jew sites" and is dedicated to "the global struggle"), or from any number of other creepy corners of the web. They also turn up in much earnest Palestinian advocacy. In fact, the fraudulent quotes litter readers' comments everywhere the Middle East is discussed online, posted often by zealous newcomers to Mideast issues, righteously indignant that these revelations to which they have just recently become privy have been hidden from them by the cabal that keeps the masses ignorant and under their thumbs.

Three new picketers in front of Beth Israel Congregation on a recent Shabbat

One of Herskovitz's most odious forgeries was tracked down by CAMERA, in its "Quote Busters" feature. It's attributed to a "Chairman Heilbrun" of something dubbed "the Committee to Reelect General Shlomo Lahat Mayor of Tel Aviv" in 1983. This forgery quotes "Heilbrun" as saying, "We have to kill all the Palestinians unless they are resigned to live here as slaves."

Shlomo Lahat was indeed reelected mayor of Tel Aviv in 1983 but CAMERA's researchers found no evidence of any "Chairman Heilbrun." When they contacted Shlomo Lahat, the retired politician known for his liberal, dovish views, told them he'd never heard of anyone named Heilbrun. When read the statement attributed to his supposed campaign chairman, Lahat was horrified and insisted that he would never associate with people who held such grotesque views.

But one can never be too skeptical of information on the Internet. So I obtained Shlomo Lahat's home phone number in Israel and called him myself. Noting it has now been many years since he

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"Jewish peace activist" distributes Hamas forgery, other hate texts, and fraudulent internet quotes

One anti-Semitic invention passed off as an authentic quote on Henry Herskovitz' personal U-M web site (see accompanying story) was tracked down by researchers for The Committee for Accuracy in Mideast Reporting: It originated in a press release from the Islamic Association for Palestine, a pro-Hamas group. The "quote," which purports to transcribe an Israeli radio broadcast by Ariel Sharon, states:

"Every time we do something you tell me America will do this and will do that…. I want to tell you something very clear: Don't worry about American pressure on Israel. We, the Jewish people, control America, and the Americans know it."

The broadcast, of course, never existed. In some internet versions Sharon is made to boast "I control America," and the entire fabrication is sometimes put into the mouth of Ehud Olmert.

Another hateful absurdity distributed by Herskovitz has "the Jewish people" plotting to take over the entire Middle East, from Egypt to Iraq. It says:

> "The present map of Palestine was drawn by the British mandate. The Jewish people have another map that our youth and adults should strive to fulfill–From the Nile to the Euphrates."

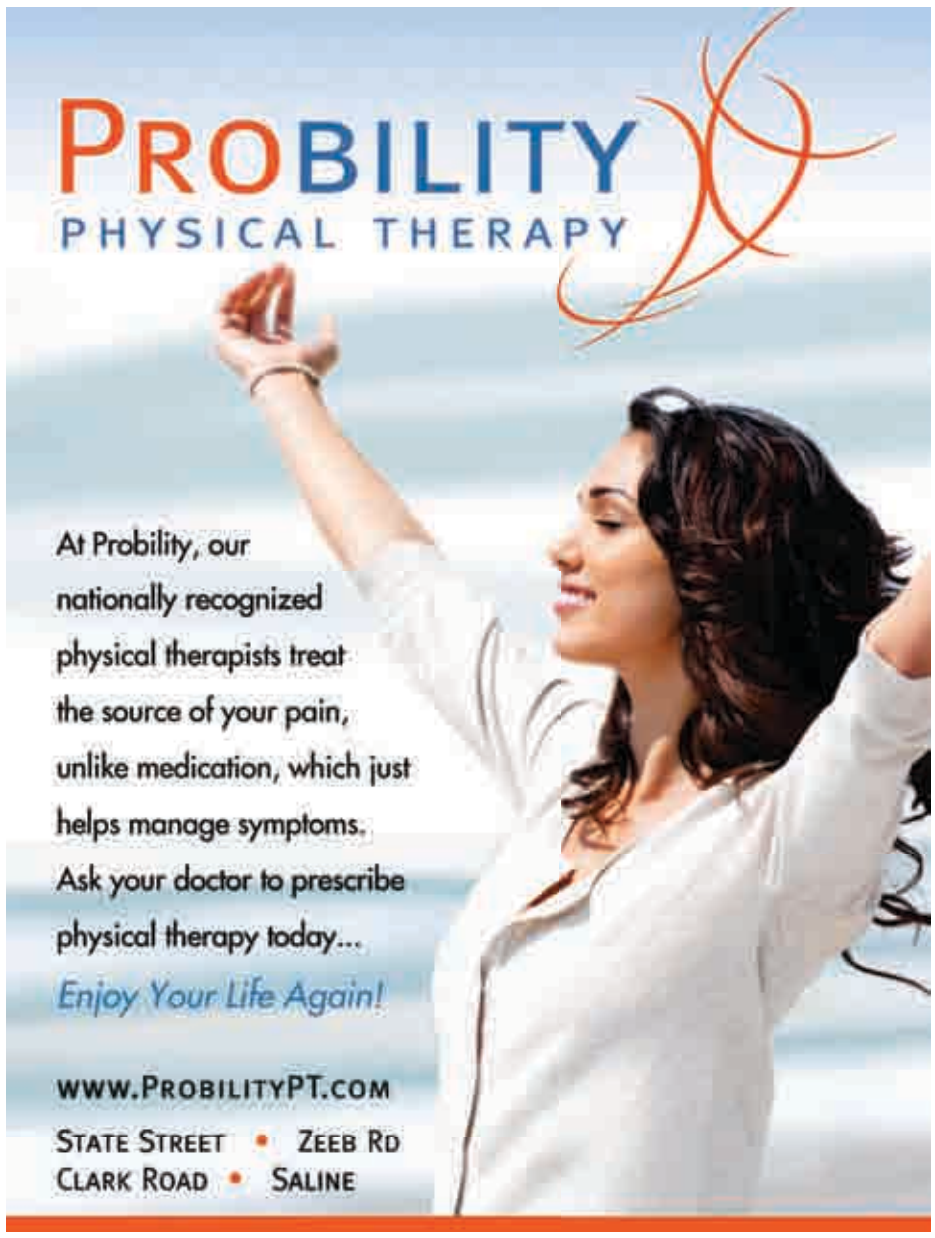
Not even Herskovitz has bothered to invent a context for this bogus phrase. Everywhere on the Internet it's attributed simply to Israel's first prime minister, "Ben Gurion," with no date or source—or first name. It is but one version of a paranoid delusion that runs deep. The "Nile to the Euphrates" canard was mentioned in Palestinian media more than 20 times recently, according to one monitoring group (PMW.org). Some of the fantasies are amusingly loony. Yassir Arafat claimed a secret Nile to Euphrates message was designed into the Israeli 10 agorot coin, and the two blue stripes on the Israeli flag are supposed to signal Jewish intentions towards the two claimed rivers. (The blue stripes are modeled on the traditional Jewish prayer shawl according to http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/isflag.html.) For more on this, go to http://pmw.org.il/bulletins_jun2007.htm#b100607 and http://www.theaugeanstables.com/2007/06/12/from-the-nile-to-the-euphrates-paranoid-imperialism-projects-its-cognitive-egocentrism/

Fraudulent internet quotes received some overdue attention when Columbia University scholar Rashid Khalidi embarrassed himself by trotting one out in an oped (the bogus quote was recently minted and are not among those in Herskovitz' collection). *The New York Times* had to publish a correction to "What you don't know about Gaza" (January 8, 2009). Khalidi had made much of a forged statement from Moshe Yaalon, saying:

"Far more revealing are the words of Moshe Yaalon, then the Israeli Defense Forces chief of staff, in 2002: 'The Palestinians must be made to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness that they are a defeated people.'" (http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990CE4D91630F933A05752C0A96F9C8B63)

In fact, what Yaalon said was the opposite: "I defined it [victory] from the beginning of the confrontation: the very deep internalization by the Palestinians that terrorism and violence will not defeat us, will not make us fold."

Toronto Star columnist Oakland Ross gave a full account of the hoax: "Damaging Israeli Misquote Finally Corrected." Ross listed a slew of publications that had published opinion pieces flourishing the supposedly-revealing statement. Published retractions eventually were printed by the *Boston Globe, The London Review of Books, The New York Times, Time Magazine* and many others. (http://www.thestar.com/news/world/article/678245.) ■



False Witness, from page 33

was in politics, Lahat assured me, too, that he did not recall ever knowing anyone named Heilbrun, and that the opinions ascribed to the unknown character were "something evil." Furthermore, he wanted to be sure I understood, "the majority of people here want peace" and believe in "equal rights for everyone."

CAMERA's Quote Busters were invoked in yet another local connection—surprisingly, by Michelle Kinnucan of Zionists Out, in relation to an article Kinnucan wrote for *The Arab American News.* That nationally distributed paper headquartered in Dearborn printed it as "Detroit Jewish Federation: Celebrating racism and making money at it" (August 8, 2008).

In it, Kinnucan attacked Jewish Federation plans to celebrate Israel Independence Day by renting the Michigan State Fairgrounds for a community party, as Detroit Jews had done to celebrate Israel's very first independence day 60 years prior. The event would take place the day before the fair officially opened and was touted as a model of private leasing that could be a potential new revenue stream for the dangerously underfunded state budget. As much as $100,000 of new, non-tax income to the state was predicted.

Kinnucan's take on this? Rich, powerful Jews cheated Michigan taxpayers in a "sweetheart deal" (the Federation had gotten a group discount rate) and were now poised to invade the State Fair area, a black neighborhood impoverished and kept down largely through Jewish depredations. The rich Jews were planning an ostentatious "display of wealth and power" and a "triumphal celebration of racism and genocide." All other kids and families would just have to wait while the very, very rich Jews selfishly enjoyed exclusive use of the fair's attractions, celebrated apartheid, and rejoiced in the genocide of Palestinians. And the very rich Jews were going to make money doing it.

And, Kinnucan said, black people should hate Israel. Needless to say, many people found Kinnucan's article stunningly offensive.

In the course of the article Kinnucan referenced an anti-Israel statement by Malcom X. The inevitable response from Detroit's Jewish Community Relations Council included the counter observation: "The Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. said anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism." This provoked Kinnucan to lash back (*Arab American News*, August 29, 2008) with the following:

> "It is virtually inconceivable that [MLK] supported Israel or Zionism. Conveniently, the JCRC omits any sources for their claim. A 1967 letter attributed to the Rev. Dr. King that Zionists frequently cite in their favor has been described by the pro-Israel Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America as a 'hoax.'
>
> "–this leaves only the report of the pro-Israel Seymour Martin Lipset on a 1968 speech that probably never happened and was only published more than a year after the Rev. Dr. King was dead and, thus, unable to refute lies spread in his name."

Virtually inconceivable? After reading the CAMERA article? Only to someone wearing blinders and

On the back of each sign carried by the picketers, it says "Return to Henry Herskovitz, Ann Arbor, MI 734-663-3649"

a harboring a powerful capacity for self-deception. True, those intrepid researchers did expose as a hoax one "quote" by MLK that's floating around the Internet as "Letter to an anti-Zionist Friend." But the purpose of the piece was to direct anyone interested in King's views away from the debunked letter and towards verified quotes expressing the same sentiment. Much of the CAMERA piece is taken up with an op-ed reprinted from the San Francisco Chronicle: "I have a dream– for peace in the Middle East: Martin Luther King Jr.'s special bond with Israel" (January 21, 2002). It describes King's admiring witness of Israel's rebirth, his great respect for the country's achievements, its commitment to democracy, and his "constantly reiterated" support for its right to exist free from its neighbors' repeated threats to annihilate it. It also relates that Harvard speech "that probably never happened" where King shut down a hostile questioner who was excoriating "Zionists" : "you are talking anti-Semitism."

The op-ed's author shares a powerful King passage that begins "Peace for Israel means security, and we must stand with all our might to protect its right to exist, its territorial integrity." This was early in 1968, just months after the proclamation of the Arab League's Khartoum summit, where Palestinians and their allies had rebuffed Israel's offer to pull back from land recently captured in the Six Day War in exchange for permanent peace. In answer, the (then) 14 Arab League dictatorships had emphatically proclaimed that they would never allow Israel to exist in peace. Instead, they vowed to continue the war by diplomatic attack while they coordinated to "strengthen military preparation."

The source for MLK's true views on the eve of his murder (and, needless to say, before the subsequent decades of compounding cruelties, injustices, and tragic disappointments in Mideast peacemaking) and writer of the *San Francisco Chronicle* op-ed is not some lying Jew roiling Kinnucan's imagination. It's U.S. Congressman John Lewis, confidant of Dr. King, bona fide civil rights hero himself, and witness to history.

That's real witness. Not false witness. ■

Dan Cutler is a Beth Israel congregant, who on entering the synagogue, was told by picketer Gloria Harb, "Jewish prayers should be disrupted. You pray for genocide!" One of her companions rushed over to add, "It's true! It's true!"

For a fuller discussion of the fake quotes discussed in this article, see the link at dancutlermedicalart.com.

Vitals

Mazal tov

Samantha Kennedy on her bat mitzvah, March 13.
Abby Calef on her bat mitzvah, March 20.
Noah Rothstein on his bar mitzvah, March 27.
Carol and Gideon Hoffer on the birth of their grandson, Aitan Schwartz, son of Ronit Hoffer and Matthew Schwartz, born January 13.

Condolences

Susan Beckett on the death of her mother, Dorothy Pollack, December 26.
Amy Baker, on the death of her father, Richard Bittker, January 10.
Jesse Bernstein on the death of his wife, Lenore, January 30.
Jamie Gleason on the death of her father, Alan Gleason.
Katherine Litow on the death of her father, Robert L. Welk, February 1.
Eric Lipson on the death of his uncle, Mel Barclay, February 2.
Jerome and Leonora Seid and Aleksandra Wilanowski on the death of Richard Seid.
Judith Ahronheim on the death of her mother, Lenore Rubinstein.
Karen Lindenberg, on the death of her step-father, Sol Sachs, February 16.

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